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Fortieth anniversary of a demoralised republic

RHEINISCHER MERKUR

The GDR is a republic with its suitcases packed and ready to go. This is so despite the "We Want To Stay!" chants of Leipzig demonstrators just before its 40th anniversary.

The stay-behinds are no less keen on staying on under the present regime than the refugees who count themselves lucky to have made it to the West.

They may want to stay at home among friends and neighbours, but they want another form of government.

The one that celebrated its 40th anniversary in such grotesque disregard of the situation is that of a republic run by a sick and ageing *nomenklatura*.

It no longer has anything whatever to do with the people who live in the GDR. They are packed and ready; ready to head for a future based on human rights and freedom of movement.

Whether this future will style itself socialist is of minor importance. Human rights are older than any of the "isms" of the modern era. They are based on natural law and are not derivatives.

A socialism that was based on bourgeois rights could be sure of the widespread approval of people who lived under it. François Mitterrand, for instance, styles himself a socialist.

That is why socialism of this kind is seen through by the GDR regime as what it is: Opposition camouflage, sirens singing of socialism and meaning freedom.

The GDR leaders are far too conscious of what they claim to be theirs by right to be taken in by this rhetoric. An Erich Honecker is *not to be hoodwinked* by such talk.

Resorting to the most brutal choice of words he has been heard to use for years, he replied, mustering all his dwindling strength: "The GDR will continue to be a door-bolt again[illegible]

Impressive though that may sound in *theory, what does it look like in practice* when Mr Gorbachov arrives on the scene?

The Soviet leader's visit to East Berlin for the GDR's 40th anniversary celebrations was a Greek gift for the GDR leaders, as the Chinese leaders noted last spring when he visited Peking.

Demonstrators in the streets of the Chinese capital chanted "Gorbi! Gorbi!" – the sound of things to come – while their hero made his peace with their oppressors.

This state of affairs was repeated at the *Palast der Republik* in East Berlin, where the GDR *regime was guaranteed by the* very man whose reform policies have unmasked it in full view of history as what it is: untenable, unfit to survive.

The GDR undeniably continues to be of vital importance for the maintenance of Soviet power in Europe, but that alone does not justify the GDR leaders in closing their minds to new ideas.

Stubborn as mules, they insist on maintaining the status quo as though they were they executors of post-war history.

Yet at the same time they cannot fail to see the epoch-making process of reform on which neighbouring countries have embarked, reforms that do not, initially, call the status quo into question.

But there is nothing in writing to say that the post-war system must for all time prevent individual countries from catching up with the modern era in economics and constitutional government.

That, basically, is the hallmark of Mr Gorbachov's change. The Soviet leader is trying to reconcile the principle of national self-determination with his own country's security interests.

In other words, while he would like to see these interests continue to be safeguarded, he would prefer not to continue to exact the price oppression has always imposed on "friendly" states.

The GDR regime has categorically rejected this offer, which forms part of Soviet "new thinking."

While the deep-freeze of history is slowly starting to defrost all round the GDR, Herr Honecker would sooner keep his country "fresh" at sub-zero temperatures.

His anxiety is understandable. After a thaw his brand of socialism would end its shelf life no less abruptly than its rival brands in Poland or Hungary.

But, unlike in Poland or Hungary, the question that would inevitably arise in the other German state after this process of decay is whether the GDR retained a *separate and distinct national identity.*

Herr Honecker's experts have grave doubts. Otto Reinhold, head of the GDR Academy of Social Sciences, has frankly admitted that there would be no justification in a capitalist GDR existing alongside a capitalist Federal Republic.

This pessimism is typical of people who have *held on to power for far too* long without the least legitimation. They are only able to think in terms of decline and fall. Viewed from the outside, how-

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DDR 40

Happy Birthday (Cartoon: Horst Haitzinger/Hannoversche Allgemeine)

Avalanche of democratic reform pressure from below

Inevitable though it may be in terms of political logic, it is still hard to believe that forces in the GDR which advocate a democratic reform of socialism based on the will of the people have launched an avalanche.

Reports from East Berlin and Moscow indicate that GDR leader Erich Honecker is about to step down, an overwhelming majority in the SED politburo having endorsed a Gorbachov-style policy of renewal.

Kurt Hager, 77, politburo member in *charge of ideological issues and previously* strictly opposed to glasnost and perestroika in the GDR, has of all people switched allegiance.

He has now publicly advocated changes including more active participation by people in the GDR in the solution of social problems and an improvement in information policy.

Are the powers that be finally yielding to grassroots demands? If they are, it is an unprecedented departure for the GDR, where political decisions are imposed from above, and not vice versa.

In the past the SED and its media have *decided which issues were to be highlighted* and debated in public, and Mr Gorbachov's reforms and the reasons for the mass exodus of refugees from the GDR were taboo.

Pressure from below has now grown overwhelming, with an unbearable divergence between topics that are to the SED's liking and issues that really interest the general public.

No matter how limited the SED leaders' inclination toward reform may be, matters will now take their own course, no longer lending themselves to tutelage and manipulation by the powers that be.

The spectacle of the past few days has been a nightmare, that of an incorrigible GDR leadership which insisted that not a tear needed to be shed for the tens of thousands who headed for the West and that this unbearable non-stop exodus was of no concern, a non-issue.

The Interior Ministry suspected active members of GDR society, people worried about the future of their country, resolved *to stay and to usher in changes*, of being "enemies of the state" and threatened them with legal consequences.

Party media and TV commentators such as Karl-Eduard von Schnitzler dismissed the tens of thousands of young people who took to the streets to demonstrate for democracy and reforms as rowdies and trouble-makers and saw police baton-charges as a fitting answer to the questions they asked.

The muzzled Party press had nothing whatever to say about the problems that really worried people, preferring instead to laud a sterile regime to the skies.

The regime, driven into a corner, threatened to respond in Chinese style and demonstratively congratulated the Chinese leaders on the Tienanmen massacre.

One can but hope that the threat of a bloodbath against young demonstrators in the GDR is now over. It was a threat by which hard-liners — *Betonköpfe*, or "concrete heads" — in the SED politburo hoped to gain a breathing-space.

A number of works militias might well

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■ THE VISIT

Gorbachov's plain words of warning

Saarbrücker Zeitung

Mikhail Gorbachov has not exactly been blessed with the best of luck in his visits to communist countries. In Peking, for instance, he had to use side entrances to government buildings because students were camped out in Tienanmen Square.

The situation was not that bad in East Berlin, but similarities are alarming when one bears in mind what happened in China once the Soviet leader had left.

On the 40th anniversary evening, after attending the official ceremony in the *Palast der Republik* and before he was driven to Schönefeld airport to fly home to Moscow, Mr Gorbachov may have been able to hear demonstrators' cries of "Gorbi, help us!"

Within the framework of what was possible the CPSU general secretary behaved in East Berlin like a politician who had plainly and persistently told a problematic pact partner to heed the signs of the times.

No-one could expect him to read the Riot Act in public in his commemoration address at the *Palast der Republik*. That simply doesn't happen.

But he had time enough for plain words that afternoon when he conferred with Erich Honecker at Schloss Niederschönhausen and held talks with the SED politburo.

What the spokesman for the Soviet Foreign Ministry, Gennadi Gerassimov, told the press in East Berlin was revealing enough.

Mr Gorbachov, he said, had said life constantly posed fresh problems and that the mood and needs of the people must be recognised. "Life punishes those who react too late," the Soviet leader was reported to have said.

Plainer speaking by a world power to a major ally is barely conceivable.

Politically and economically the GDR is still an important partner of the Soviet Union. Hard pressed by domestic problems, Mr Gorbachov is unlikely to want to risk a serious clash with the GDR, an ally on its western perimeter.

This warning note was exactly in keeping with remarks Mr Gorbachov had made to Western journalists in the afternoon of the previous day on Unter den Linden in East Berlin.

"Danger," he said, "arises only in respect of those who fail to react to life."

Careful consideration must also be given to a remark he made in his brief speech at the *Palast der Republik* that evening.

"We have no doubt," he said, "that the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, with its intellectual potential, its rich experience and its political authority, is in a position to find an answer, in collaboration with all forces in society, to issues that arise and find their way on to the agenda by virtue of developments in the republic, rousing its citizens' emotions."

This too was a warning that could not fail to go unnoticed, a reminder to embark on change, couched in diplomatic terms.

Fittingly, Mr Gorbachov's own policy allows Warsaw Pact members strict freedom of activity. Issues that affect the GDR are "decided in Berlin, not in Moscow."

The GDR remains "a true friend and ally" of the Soviet Union with a leading role to play in maintaining the status quo, if only in connection with the balance of power in Europe, as seen from the Soviet vantage point.

Significantly, Mr Gorbachov referred to the GDR at one point as a "strategic friend and ally."

He made it clear enough that he differed from the GDR on domestic policy issues, but in foreign and economic policy he cannot, for the time being, be interested in keeping his distance from East Berlin.

No-one who heard the cries of "Gorbi!" in East Berlin will be surprised to learn that Mr Gorbachov announced on his return to Moscow that his impression was that young people in the GDR were following the progress of perestroika in the USSR with great sympathy.

Some of these young people are the very people government propaganda in East Berlin equates with hooligans and troublemakers.

(Saarbrücker Zeitung, 9 October 1989)



Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachov, left, hugs GDR's Erich Honecker on arrival at Schönefeld airport, East Berlin. Mrs Gorbachov looks on, right. (Photo: AP)

Don't panic, GDR is told

In his speech at the official ceremony held in East Berlin to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the GDR the Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachov, went as far as he could in the circumstances, given who he was and the reason why he was there.

He kept to his policy of abandoning the Brezhnev Doctrine of open intervention inasmuch as he chose the formal approach of reaffirming the process of far-reaching reforms and new thinking in the Soviet Union.

The embarrassed expressions on the faces of GDR leaders made it clear that this had nonetheless been understood.

In contrast to the intellectual pallor of the speech by GDR leader Erich Honecker, which was merely the umpteenth rehash of old slogans, Mr Gorbachov outlined something of a political philosophy in which specific assessments differed markedly from his hosts'.

Given a mass exodus of refugees from the GDR that only special trains could handle, he left Herr Honecker on his own with the claim that "one of the greatest achievements of our republic (is that) all young people, without exception, have a future."

Instead he referred to a changing world with new questions and challenges the SED, "with its intellectual potential" must face.

Much of what the Soviet leader said would have led to the police being sent in if it had been said by demonstrators in Leipzig or elsewhere.

He said, for instance, that answers must be found to questions that concern people, that cooperation of all social forces was needed and that socialism must be developed in this way.

Worse still, Bonn Chancellor Helmut Kohl was given a favourable mention by being included among the Western statesmen the Soviet leader said had a sense of reality and a constructive approach.

In the confidential talks he held with Herr Honecker after this public appearance Mr Gorbachov is sure to have been even more to the point.

He is interested in a stable GDR and, in common with an overwhelming majority of the population, feels this stability can only be achieved by means of a policy of reforms, humanisation and pluralism.

In calling on people not to become panic-stricken, he gave the young people who yelled "Gorbi, help us!" at him to understand that he saw them as citizens to be taken seriously and not as agents provocateurs.

He realised that they placed their hopes in him rather than in their own government. He could hardly have been more outspoken than he was in saying: "Dangers await only those who fail to react to life."

(Der Tagesspiegel, Berlin, 7 October 1989)

The SED state celebrated its 40th anniversary with a lavish display of pomp, circumstance and self-praise. But in reality the glass is falling fast as the storm clouds gather.

The "workers' and peasants' state" set up by the grace of Stalin is shaking in its very foundations.

Mikhail Gorbachov, the highest-ranking anniversary guest, witnessed a mass exodus from "socialism in being."

Yet what he was shown on Unter den Linden in East Berlin was not the declaration of bankruptcy of a system that was finished but a mass demonstration of support for the system by people ordered to attend.

He and the other Warsaw Pact dignitaries who witnessed the march-past in East Berlin had little choice but to make the best of a macabre business.

But queries, doubts, fears, warnings and criticism were the keynotes of the confidential talks held afterwards with SED leader Erich Honecker and his politburo.

Alarm was particularly apparent in reform-oriented "fraternal countries" worried by the negative repercussions of the refugee exodus and its scenario on the East Bloc as a whole.

The disastrous defeats inflicted on the GDR leaders by their dissatisfied people are increasingly felt by other members of

Soviet leader is welcomed as ray of hope

the Warsaw Pact to be a burden and a blemish on their reputation.

The Warsaw Pact cannot be keen to see domestic pressure in the GDR further increase as a result of sealing-off of borders, leading to such a powerful head of steam building up that the boiler bursts.

The Warsaw Pact as a whole would suffer as a result. Resort to strict repression such as people in the GDR feared might occur after the anniversary celebrations would have unforeseeable consequences both for the process of reform in the East and for East-West ties in general.

Germans in the GDR welcomed Mr Gorbachov as a ray of hope. They expected him to urge their leaders to change course and pursue much more liberal policies.

Their hopes may have been set too high. Gone are the days when a word from Moscow was communism's command. On numerous occasions Mr Gorbachov has stressed that socialist countries are individually responsible for the shape their socialism takes.

The Soviet leader had little or no choice but to lend the SED regime outward support, and Bonn inevitably came in for a few propaganda pinpricks.

Yet he was equally unwilling to be too clearly identified with the hardliners in East Berlin who are strictly opposed to his reform policies.

His vision of a common house of Europe would be hard hit if tenants of a windowless room known as the GDR were to continue to vote with their feet.

People in the GDR had visions of a Tienanmen-style situation if the Warsaw Pact leaders were confronted with mass protest or riots during the anniversary celebrations.

Even the vociferous demonstrations of sympathy and support for "Gorbi" were hard to stomach for Herr Honecker and his ageing associates.

Everyone who was present will have been only too well aware that Mr Gorbachov has 400,000 Red Army troops stationed in the GDR and vital Soviet security interests to defend between the Oder and the Elbe.

The Soviet leader was certainly not to be envied his guest appearance in East Berlin.

Herbert Leiner

(General-Anzeiger, Bonn, 6 October 1989)

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■ BACKGROUND

SED celebrates the past, ignores the future

As officialdom concentrated on the 40th anniversary parade in East Berlin, Opposition groups concentrated on the shape of things to come in what they envisaged as a new-look GDR.

The celebrations held to mark the 40th anniversary of the German Democratic Republic can be explained as nothing more than the leadership's steadfastness to celebrate a flight from reality.

The leadership paid honour to their view of the state with martial panoply, as if nothing had happened over the past few weeks and months, events which have drawn attention to the GDR and aroused the emotions of its citizens.

There have been military parades and official celebrations, all making the point that the GDR is the greatest and the best that German history has ever produced.

It is this determination to exclude everything that is unwanted from an image of what the GDR should be like which has made the anniversary so macabre.

Then, despite all the speeches made, the cheering and the marching formations the question persistently comes to mind, whether there actually is a GDR of the type being celebrated.

Certainly it would be wise not to put too much value on the moving events of the past few weeks. The GDR, despite the small exodus of citizens via Prague, Budapest and Warsaw, the protest campaigns in East Germany and an opposition which is forming, is in no way a house of cards which has fallen down.

The state is still a massive reality. The Socialist Unity Party (SED) and the state still have the reins of power firmly in their hands.

Millions, via their careers and social positions, are bound to circumstances which the SED controls. For the socialist countries of the world and the Soviet Union, the GDR is a significant power, due to the country's economic strength and its strategic position as a clamp holding the socialist camp together, a camp which has become frail.

But at the same time the GDR has been deeply changed by the mass exodus of its citizens and the growing unrest in the country.

They have torn down the results, which the 40th anniverary were meant to celebrate, into the depths of helplessness and hopelessness.

Instead of the pride in achievements which a review of the past 40 years should have aroused there is now a feeling that it was all a mistake.

Even if the refugees and protests are seen as a peripheral phenomenon of a society which is resigned, depressed and dissatisfied, the fact remains that these mercilessly highlight that the claims of the GDR leadership and reality in the country have never been so wide apart as at present.

Claims and reality in the GDR have never been very close to one another. A fundamental evil of this state is that it has never been able to bring the two together so that they do not constantly cast doubt on each other.

But a glance at East German history shows that there were times when the GDR was on firmer ground than it is now. This is true of the first years of the Honecker era.

The GDR leadership has obtained support to some extent from the population, but that does not indicate conviction or agreement. That is rare, the attitude of a minority.

People wanted a little affluence and good fortune. For this reason they were prepared to come to an understanding with the regime when it went against them.

Their support was given in the hope that such an understanding would have ultimately lead to a gradual change which would make political and economic life more open and freer.

The possibilities of reaching an understanding between the leadership and the people which have coloured GDR life at least since the Berlin Wall went up have been exhausted. Expectations which were coupled to this understanding have been disappointed.

This understanding survived, as it were, on the premise that it was safeguarded internally and externally: by the fear of violent suppression by the state and the fact that it seemed inconceivable that there would be any changes in the circumstances of the socialist countries in the world.

These safeguards have worked themselves loose. The fear of being a refugee from the state has disappeared.

The developments in the Soviet Union, Poland and Hungary have shown that there is the possibility of change where, since the division of Germany in 1945, it seemed that the likelihood of change was out of the question.

That opens up the GDR to changes which strike at the state's foundations. The state whose establishment was celebrated on 7 October in East Berlin is still there but it has no future.

That is why it is more important to ask if there is a GDR at another level, in another fashion.

Today, marking 40 years of GDR history, forces the question: what has come out of these 40 years, this period of German history? Has there just been a rejection of the regime which has been demonstrated so spectacularly?

Or have postures, convictions and attitudes been formed which are different from those which citizens in the Federal Republic live by?

Is there then a certain independence, the outcome of experiences, which people in East Germany have undergone — maintaining one's position against the pressure from the regime, coming to terms with it, and withdrawing into a private niche?

How deep is this sense of being an East German, which has little enough to do with the national consciousness the GDR leadership has tried to blast into citizens? How resilient is it?

Of all the German questions which the violence of developments have made into open questions, these are the most difficult to answer. They are also the most important.

The chances of reform are dependent on how powerfully people accept the GDR as the place where they are to live, the GDR which was established against their will, an organisation maintained by

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Süddeutsche Zeitung



(Cartoon: Hanel/FAZ)

GDR leaders agree to discuss demand for reform

There have been dramatic developments in the German Democratic Republic. For the first time in its history the Party — the Socialist Unity Party (SED) — and state leadership must discuss demands for reform, which they have declined to do before.

Erstwhile means of repression, which used to work, failed to apply immediately after Mikhail Gorbachov's visit on 7 October. A considerable minority were no longer intimidated by these methods.

The East Berlin leadership realised for the first time that there was a new self-confidence among the people subject to their power, and that they were capable of non-violent protest even against tough pressure.

The fact that the demonstrators did not want to leave or ruin the state, but wanted to remain and demanded reforms, robbed the state of almost all inflammatory possibilities.

In view of the dynamic changes in neighbouring countries and the tension of their own leadership, many people in the GDR said that the new Opposition was right.

To this could be added that the classic methods of applying pressure could not count on Soviet support when these methods achieved the opposite of that for which they were intended: increasing unrest instead of enforced quiet.

The Russians were not going to call in the tanks when the trouble was the Honecker regime's own fault. Mr Gorbachov's allies are the reformers, not the hardliners who don't want to put their house in order.

Realising this, the SED leaders have halted the street battles with the demonstrators, who have for some time pressed for reform and relaxations in GDR society.

This has made obvious to all that there is a split in the SED which cannot now be closed. This has led to a fundamental political disagreement.

Under this kind of pressure it seems that the East Berlin regime is prepared to hold talks with the Church, at present the only institutional opposition.

But not too many hopes should be pinned on this, even if the discussions should include fundamentals and not just the demonstrators held in custody.

This current bowing to events does not mean that the East Berlin leadership is prepared to make concessions which would put in doubt the SED's power monopooly and control over the media.

The leadership will promise to hold discussions with citizens or something of that kind, hoping that the tidal wave will drain away.

That is the point at which those in the SED who are prepared for reform must take action — after they have taken the first step, the revolt against the Party leadership.

The Church, pressed involuntarily into the role of mediator and not entirely happy with this position, can only achieve something in the talks envisaged with the SED if internal and external pressure is maintained.

The aims of the negotiations are far-reaching enough: opening up the regime, dialogue with the people, a break-up of the out-dated power structure, pluralism, freedom of expression, legalisation of the reform groups and, in the long term, the hope of free elections.

Every one of these demands is aimed ultimately at breaking up the SED's power monopoly: only in this way can fundamental reforms be fulfilled in the GDR.

Those who have started off this development must keep in mind that the only way they can exert pressure is through the preparedness of the masses to demonstrate.

Anyone who now recommends a "pause for thought" is playing into the hands of those unwilling to introduce reforms. Representatives of New Forum, much closer to events, take this view as well.

The regime will only take action when it sees that delaying tactics could only exacerbate the situation.

The Church, by its nature, is for laying aside conflicts. This puts the Church in a difficult position as a negotiating partner, if Opposition groups do not so act as to give it support.

Little can be done from the outside without endangering the reformers. Careful coverage of the processes going on in the GDR by the international press is important. The East Berlin regime, ever sensitive about its reputation, has always been influenced by this.

Offers of economic aid, linked to good behaviour as regards reforms, which the Federal Republic has repeatedly presented, could favourably influence the decision-making process, but they are not decisive.

The central question of Communist survival has been put to Honecker and

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■ OPPOSITION

New Forum seeks its own road to socialism

New Forum, the best-known Opposition group, has an estimated 10,000 members all over the GDR. Its spokespersons are painter Bärbel Bohley and lawyer Rolf Henrich. Members include Katja Havemann, widow of civil rights campaigner Robert Havemann.

Considerable surprise has been expressed *in the West, particularly in* Bonn, at the critical statements made about the refugees from Prague and Warsaw by a GDR reform group which has become an opinion leader among Opposition circles in East Germany.

In a television interview Bärbel Bohley, speaking for the East German Opposition movement New Forum, said it had been misunderstood.

She said: "We are not of the view we should pass judgment on the refugees who get to the West, but we want to say that that is not a political solution, but simply a solution which is enforced by the facts.

"There is only one solution for the GDR and that is political reform." When she was asked if New Forum approved of the refugees leaving the GDR she replied unequivocally: "But yes."

These queries and amendments are both typical of problems of intra-German understanding and confirm the dilemma which faces New Forum.

There was no question that the first people to sign the appeal entitled "Departure 89" — more *than 10,000* signed this petition — did not consider themselves to be the mouthpiece for the refugees or as a sounding-board for the majority of the people.

A vital sentence in the appeal made at New Forum's foundation said: "We want to hold on to the tried and tested and still create a place for new ideas."

The Forum wants to think beyond the immediate future, wants to overcome the speechlessness and hopeless of the thousands in the embassies "and those who will follow them," but not turn its back on the GDR.

The call of the 20,000 in Leipzig, "We want to stay" as a reply to the chorus "We want to get out," indicates the deep gap between the moral-intellectual aims of the Forum and the real opinions of broad sectors of society in the GDR.

New Forum has not been able to impress on people that it is a solution, an aim or an alternative to leaving the country.

The founding members included pastors, students, doctors, music teachers, physists and prominent microbiologists. They are striving plainly for changes within the GDR system.

The group's first document was quickly branded as "anti-state" by the GDR Interior Ministry. The document called for reflection "together and in the whole country."

One of the most important reform thinkers in the GDR was asked why the refugees in Prague and Warsaw did not believe the undertakings made by Honecker's intimate friend Wolfgang Vogel.

"I'm not concerned with that," he said. "It isn't a matter that interests me."

The question of leaving the country is, indeed, neither a matter of importance to him and others, nor is the analysis of the reasons people leave the GDR a matter of great concern.

If New Forum is to be placed in the stereotype view of the parties in the Federal Republic then it can be described in these terms.

It is to the right of the Socialist Unity Party (SED) as the party of the working class, ready to work together with comrades from the SED, but recognisably left of the SPD, basically democratically organised and "green," making its own "way to socialism."

Obviously not a party after the SED example, as lawyer Rolf Heinrich, expelled from the Honecker party, emphasised.

The five most important headings in the appeal New Forum made on its establishment included a "desire for justice, democracy, freedom, and protection and safeguards for nature."

These illustrate its political approach. It is a mixture of the Prague Spring, Gorbachov, Hungary's "revolution from above" and Green ways of thought.

Until now the national question has not been important either with New Forum or with other critical groups. Bärbel Bohley has nothing to do with words such as "reunification."

Reinhard Schult, who is a cement worker and is a founder-member of New Forum, said: "We are not interested in reunification. This CDU tootling about 'our brothers and sisters in the East' is irritating and disgusting."

This is one voice among many in the range of opinions included in New Forum, and the majority of founders take up this posture.

On the other hand an experienced man such as Pastor Hans-Jochen Tschiche has thought the matter through further. He is head of the Protestant Academy in Magdeburg and a founding member of New Forum.

He said: "The continued political existence of the GDR is dependent on how the country itself determines its function in central and eastern Europe. The country cannot be an appendage of the Federal Republic."



Spokesperson Bärbel Bohley

(Photo: dpa)

The sovereignty of the GDR is not questioned, but its role in connection with the European dimension of the German Question is.

It is to be noted that members of New Forum have so far, for example, not openly gone along with the frank statements made by Otto Reinhold. He is one of the most important SED ideologists who thinks about the GDR as being in principle moulded by Marxist-style socialism.

He says that if the GDR did not ideologically hold contrary views to the Federal Republic, then the country would have no justification for its existence.

Where would the GDR be if "Germans here were the same as Germans over there," all brought into a similar system?

Bärbel Bohley has to do battle on several fronts at the same time. While the Free German Youth's daily *Junge Welt* reproaches her for doing nothing more than strive for a "platform against the present socialist circumstances," the majority of people, for a long time tired of politics, reject every kind of activity with political "models" or gradual, positive steps towards development.

Since signals for reform, which the SED leadership should have sent out at the latest in summer 1988, are lacking, domestic estrangement progresses.

D. Dose/H. R. Karutz

(Die Welt, Bonn, 4 October 1989)

Civil rights campaigner Bärbel Bohley

We must get used to saying what we think frankly and openly," said the only woman on the platform of the Peace Workshop held in the Erlöserkirche, or Church of Our Saviour, in East Berlin seven years ago.

Bärbel Bohley is a painter and graphic artist. She was then slim and ascetic, and an influential spokeswoman for the Peace Movement in the GDR.

Along with others she helped found the Women for Peace movement and in October 1982 presented a petition to the chairman of the Council of State, Erich Honecker.

She was a prisoner awaiting trial, along with a female comrade-in-arms, from December 1983 to January 1984, because both had spoken with a member of the Green Party from the Federal Republic about peace activities in the GDR.

For some years *Bärbel Bohley* has been a close friend of Petra Kelly, a leader of the Greens in the Federal Republic.

Frau Bohley was one of the initiators of New Forum. Five thousand people have already signed a petition for the legalisation of New Forum as a political platform, active throughout the country, as an open political forum for people of all classes and strata of GDR society.

After the Luxemburg-Liebknecht demonstration in January 1988 Bärbel Bohley was arrested for "treasonable relationships." She was then a leading member of the Peace and Human Rights movement.

The authorities were able to push her over into the West, but she opposed expatriation. After six months she was able to return to the GDR with a GDR passport, helped by the Protestant Church.

Art experts describe Bärbel Bohley as an "independent artist" whose sober choice of motives has a provocative effect on many who see her work.

She is an artist in whose works people, not landscapes, have the dominant role. She does not regard herself as a politician.

But she is always *ready to stand up* for others and to *help them*. She has the ability and the *courage* to present her convictions with eloquence and power, and she is prepared to listen.

Over the past ten years these qualities have made her into the spokeswoman for those who have remained silent. She has not been discouraged by harassment by the security forces.

She is a *Christian* who is striving for a humane, democratic socialism. She shudders at words such as "reunification," and equally at ideas that "capitalism" could return to the GDR. She applies her optimism to the present, so often depressing.

She was born just a few days before "liberation" in Berlin in 1945. She studied at the East Berlin Art College and since 1974 has been a freelance artist.

She said: "Often situations change faster than you think they would." She has been accused of being "starry-eyed." This she counters with the statement that she sees a difference clearly.

She is also optimistic about New Forum. The GDR will not be able to avoid legalising this citizens' initiative one day, she feels. *Peter Jochen Winters*

(Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland, 4 October 1989)

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have refused to obey orders to shoot at demonstrators. Tempers are running high at factories, with workers clamouring for discussions and reforms.

The regime now seems to have climbed down in view of this revolutionary mood. It had visions of a July 1953-style workers' uprising.

Are the days now over in which more sense could be talked with Hungarian, Polish or Soviet Communists than with their German comrades, who merely repeated teased-out class struggle slogans?

There were few signs of a new spirit in the SED politburo's 11 October declaration other than the SED leadership's stated readiness to discuss the causes of the refugee exodus "jointly" with all and sundry.

Attacks on the Federal Republic that were identical with the propaganda broadsides launched against Bonn in Erich Honecker's 40th anniversary address were clearly intended to divert attention from the fact that the GDR's problems are of its own making.

Accusations levelled at the "FRG" will be of no avail; the GDR leaders will still have to solve their own problems.

They would be better advised to appeal to the Federal Republic for assistance, but that is doubtless too much to expect of officials who only a few days ago would hear nothing of reforms and are now most indignant about everything that is going on in the GDR over their heads.

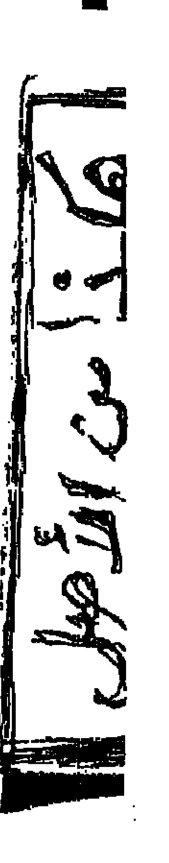
A start has been made. Numerous critics from all sectors of the population will ensure that the process continues. They now have no qualms about speaking their minds, having set aside fear of the secret police and informers.

The issue at stake is a democratic transformation of the GDR. To take it as an occasion for resuming the reunification debate in the West is to resurrect fears of old of a powerful Germany and to do would-be reformers in the GDR a disservice.

There is, however, no reason why Germans in the Federal Republic should feel less keenly for and with their fellow-countrymen in the GDR than with people in other neighbouring countries.

The European Community could well serve as a common home for free and democratically governed states in Europe, but the GDR has a long way to go before this stage is reached.

(Der Tagesspiegel, Berlin, 12 October 1989)



■ PARTY POLITICS

Bloc parties put in practice at not toeing Party line

For months there have been rumours in the GDR that the political parties which are permitted to exist alongside the SED, Erich Honecker's Socialist Unity Party, might be good for a few surprises.

And so they were when, for instance, Manfred Gerlach, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDPD) leader, drew up a document calling for a new information policy.

In Eisenach a small group of Christian Democrats have drawn up reform proposals.

These may be hesitant moves, yet they are reason for surmising that potential for change exists among the smaller parties that rank alongside the SED in the National Front.

They are also known as bloc parties by virtue of dating back to the formation of a four-party Democratic Bloc in the Soviet Zone on 14 July 1945.

The four parties that joined forces were the Communists (KPD), the Social Democrats (SPD), the Christian Democrats (CDU), led by Otto Nuschke, and the Liberal Democrats (LDPD), led by Wilhelm Külz.

In autumn 1946, just after the forcible merger of Communists and Social Democrats to form the Socialist Unity Party (SED), the bloc parties held free *Land* and local government elections (by Western standards) in the Soviet Zone.

It was the first and only time they were to do so. The SED went on to largely break up the independence of the CDU and the LDPD.

Two more parties, set up in April and May 1948, were SED splinter groups from the outset. They are the Democratic Peasants' Party (DBD) and the National Democratic Party (NDPD).

In keeping with communist "pact policy" these parties were entrusted with the task of enlisting support in classes and among social groups the SED did not claim to support.

The CDU, for instance, was entrusted with representing "progressive Christians," the LDPD with representing tradesmen, the self-employed and the professions, the NDPD with enlisting support among former Nazi "fellow-travellers" and Wehrmacht personnel, the DBD with canvassing the farmers.

That left the SED in charge of the workers. To this day the four parties are termed an indispensable part of the GDR's system.

The Democratic Bloc also includes the trades unions, the Free German Youth and the Democratic Women's League.

Between them they are considered to be the nucleus of the National Front, which since the GDR was founded has comprised all organised social groups from the *Kulturbund* to the canary breeders.

To this day the National Front decides the number of seats that are to be allocated to the relevant organisations in elections.

The CDU, LDPD, NDPD and DBD stress, in statutes adopted during the 1980s, the leading role of the SED, as specified in Article 1 of the GDR's 1974 constitution.

At the last session of the CDU presidium the Christian Democrats' general secretary, Gerald Götting, referred as a matter of course to "socialism in GDR colours" and to "the generally valid laws of socialism."

The GDR was a state toward which the CDU aimed to make an "independent contribution."

In the early 1950s the four parties had a combined membership of 580,000. Ten years later their membership was down to 350,000.

Keen though they may be to stress their independence as separate and distinct entities, none of the four has succeeded in drawing any clear distinction between itself and the SED.

Yet in the past 10 years their membership has steadily increased. Since 1977 they have gained over 20 per cent and reached an aggregate membership of 470,000.

Western figures are: CDU 140,000, up 21.7 per cent since 1977, LDPD 104,000, up 38.7 per cent, NDPD 110,000, up 29.4 per cent, and DBD 115,000, up 29.4 per cent.

The four parties' respective leaders, Messrs Götting, Gerlach, Maleuda and Homann, are four of Erich Honecker's eight deputies as chairman of the state council, or head of state.

A Christian Democrat is Minister of Posts and Telecommunications, a Liberal Democrat Minister of Justice and a DBD man Minister of the Environment.

Peter Joachim Lapp, in his book about these parties published last year in Cologne, rightly says that despite their proximity to the SED they embody a certain degree of latent opposition that is now hesitantly coming to the fore.

Attention is currently concentrated on the CDU and the Liberal Democrats.

Werner Kern

(Rheinische Post, Düsseldorf, 30 September 1989)

GDR system of goverment

Council of Ministers
Chairman: Willi Stoph (SED)
Consists of Presidium and Ministers

Council of State
Chairman: Erich Honecker (SED)
Exercises the functions of head of state

appoints

National Defence Council
Chairman: Erich Honecker

elects

elects

People's Chamber
500 members, seats allocated as follows to political parties and organisations closely associated with the SED:
Socialist Unity Party (SED) – Democratic Farmers' Party (DBD) – National Democratic Party (NDPD) – Christian Democratic Union (CDU) – Liberal Democratic Party (LDPD) – Free German Trade Union Confederation (FDGB) – Free German Youth (FDJ) – Democratic Women's League (DFD) – Kulturbund (KB)

Seats in the People's Chamber:

SED	DBD	NDPD	CDU	LDPD	FDGB	FDJ	DFD	KB
127	52	52	52	52	68	40	35	22

7927 © Globus

Opposition groups step up their calls for change

Over the GDR's 40th anniversary weekend a Social Democratic Party was set up in the GDR. Its aim is a "consistent democratisation of state and society."

The inaugural conference was held in Schwante, near Oranienburg, north-east of Berlin. Forty-three people took part.

The founding members wrote to the Socialist International, chaired by the SPD's Willy Brandt, applying for membership.

They stated in their inaugural document that, in view of the situation in the GDR, an "ecologically oriented social democracy" was needed.

Democratic development was needed as a counterweight to "increasing destabilisation" and must aim at specific content and structure.

Almost simultaneously the six leading Opposition groups in the GDR have agreed on common demands including free elections and a secret ballot under UN supervision.

In a "joint declaration" issued on the 40th anniversary eve in the Erlöserkirche, or Church of Our Saviour, in the East Berlin borough of Lichtenberg the six groups were said to want to join forces "and to consider to what extent we can set up an electoral alliance with joint candidates of our own."

The declaration was warmly welcomed by an audience of about 2,500 at a public meeting held under the heading *Wie nun weiter, DDR?* (Where now, GDR?).

It was signed by representatives of Opposition groups and of a number of Church peace committees.

Described as a minimum consensus, it stressed that groups shared "the desire to democratically transform state and society."

What mattered was to end a state of affairs in which citizens in this society lacked "the opportunity to exercise their political rights as required by the UN human rights conventions and the CSCE documents."

The groups also declared their solidarity with all who were persecuted on

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ever, a GDR without Honecker-style socialism need by no means automatically be classified as an *après moi la déluge* case.

Many young people who have just arrived from the GDR say they love their country, the GDR, but are not prepared to continue allowing themselves to be treated like children or to be abused there.

If the rule of injustice were no longer to hold sway, who could say what form of government fellow-Germans in the GDR might prefer?

Basically, then, what Otto Reinhold fears is not an end to justification of the GDR's continued existence in the event of civil rights and Western economic principles being applied.

What he fears, and rightly so, is an end to justification of the privileged position he and others like him enjoy.

He thus makes out his own gloomy prospects to be those of the state as a whole, which is a mistake made by all rulers whose position is fatally weakened.

For the time being, however, the GDR is still with us, a running sore. It is growing more gangrenous by the day as its leaders fail to embark on a dialogue with its real rulers, the people.

Young refugees from the GDR have incontrovertibly shown where the threat to peace and stability in Europe lies.

Its roots lie not in arms and the arms race but in the refusal to grant human rights and to permit progress toward greater freedom.

The shrill accusations levelled at Bonn sound a grotesque note. The powers that be in the GDR would do better to vent their ire at Moscow, where subversion really began, or at Warsaw and Budapest (and maybe, before long, Prague).

That is where the pacemakers of perestroika are to be found in Eastern Europe, pacemakers who put East Berlin to shame.

Bonn can be sure to continue, to have no choice but to continue, its government-to-government dialogue with East Berlin.

In the final analysis even a policy of "small (and gradual) steps" tends unintentionally to destabilise the situation in the GDR.

Each and every so-called human easement, such as improved travel facilities for individuals (who leave their families behind them as hostages) or "legal" applications to migrate to the West (which can be turned down), tends to open people's eyes to the inhumanity of conditions in the GDR.

In the circumstances not to call a spade a spade or to mince words would be a sin for which political parties in the Federal Republic of Germany could not be forgiven.

On its 40th anniversary the GDR regime has walled itself in even more, going a step further toward Albanian-style isolation and self-containment.

Even Czechoslovakia is now classified as a potential threat and yet another neighbouring country to which none but trusted GDR citizens must be allowed access.

But the German Demoralised Republic will need manpower aplenty to seal off its border with Czechoslovakia or with Poland (where the Oder can be crossed with ease at low water).

People in the GDR are increasingly less afraid of falling into disfavour by speaking their minds. Western TV, the progress of reforms in neighbouring East Bloc countries, the Brezhnev-like paralysis of their leaders, the widespread spirit of change among unofficial reform groups and an ambilvalent Soviet attitude are increasingly making the GDR regime seem a superfluous appendage of history.

Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze, for instance, referred in New York to the bilateral responsibility "of the two sovereign German states." Valentin Falin referred in contrast to the responsibility of the four wartime Allies.

Either way, Soviet tanks are unlikely to be available should the GDR leaders need them to hold on to power. Who can they then call on for assistance?

Thomas Kielinger

(Rheinischer Merkur/Christ und Welt, Bonn, 6 October 1989)

■ **ANNIVERSARY**

German state, 40, has no future

DIE WELT

Nominally the German Democratic Republic, but *basically Socialist* Unity Party (*SED*) officials, celebrated the 40th anniversary of the other German republic.

But few people believe there will be a 41st anniversary, as head of state Erich Honecker would have people believe.

Tens of thousands have shown in the past few weeks that there is nothing for them in the GDR, let alone grounds to celebrate.

The spontaneous change to the state-organised celebrations by those who chose to stay in the GDR gave the authorities reason to fear that guest of honour Mikhail Gorbachov would have to be kept under lock and key.

At the beginning there was the expression: "German is an indivisible democratic republic" and "there is only one German nationality."

Then: "The division of Germany will never be recognised. We want a democratic, national, economically indepedent Germany."

These phrases are more current than ever before — but they are as old as the GDR itself.

On 11 October 1949 Wilhelm Pieck confirmed with these words, addressed to the GDR's Chamber of Deputies, the claims of the first GDR constitution.

The constitution has been changed in the meantime and Johannes R. Becher's national anthem is only hummed.

The references to the unified nation in the text, "Let us serve you for the good, Germany, united Fatherland," were regarded as offensive.

But after 40 years of re-education the awareness of the people there remains unchanged.

The confirmation of German division is not primarily the result of the lost war, but the consequence of the broken pact of the victorious powers, of the development of dualism in international politics and the accompanying Cold War.

The division is as unnatural as it was at the beginning even if the years of national unity in relationship to the whole of German history are relatively few in number.

The Germans developed the idea of the nation late, later than others. But the reflections about themselves, the search for an identity, the brooding over the meaning and establishment in East and West, in ideas, these factors have shaped Germany more than in any other national or historical continuum.

Only dilettantes without any history can believe, wrongly, that they are on firm ground if they assume that the division will endure.

The Germans in East Germany have had to pay a double price for Hitler's lost war. The West was put into working order with the help of its former opponents, was put in a position for unparallelled economic growth in freedom and self-determination; Soviet Russia has pillaged the eastern part of Germany for years. Instead of aid the Russians insisted on reparations and applying pressure.

From the very beginning the GDR was a lever for the Russians, an instrument. The archives are sealed, but according to what has been made known, by Nikita Khrushchov, for instance, the GDR's very existence was doubtful for several years.

Only on 17 June 1953, when the Red Army helped to put down citizens who had become unruly, was all doubt removed. Suddenly, today, those doubts are again with us, particularly among the nervous cadres of the SED.

People in the GDR, who grew up under the Nazi dictatorship, learned about real freedom only from hearsay, as it were, but they have done admirable things.

The reconstruction of the economy under immensely more difficult conditions than in the West has won respect. It would be wrong to understand the East Germans' pride in these achievements as an identification with the second German state.

They distance themselves from the abhorred system, which could be glossed over in the West as a "niche society."

The leadership placed their hopes in the children and grandchildren of the older generation, who had not experienced anything different.

It was hoped that they could be fully swayed into the idea of the system. But in fact things turned out differently.

The writer Sascha Anderson, who moved from the East to the West in 1986, described the situation in this way. *He said:*

"Perhaps my generation, between 30 and 35, were dropouts. After us came a generation, which had not even got into things. That is the real difference in the situation in the mid-1970s.

"We knew the language of power. We still do. We acquired our aversion to power from the knowledge of its language, of its thinking.

'Freer than we were'

"The generation after us no longer understands the language of power. They do not understand its thinking, and they are freer than we were. We had to free ourselves first."

At the 40th anniversary celebrations it is clearer than ever before that this state has no future. It cannot survive, even if it begins to wall itself in.

And what of reforms? Do people in the West, who extol this way out of the problem, do they really know what this means?

Here Honecker and his aged colleagues are greater realists. Reforms in the German Democratic Republic can only mean guaranteeing freedom of expression, of pluralism, of opening up frontiers.

But in this way the GDR would lose its basic principles, its possibilities for identity in distinction to the Federal Republic.

Twenty years ago Honecker said: "History has decided here what concerns the national question."

After a further 20 years history has in fact given an answer, but in quite a different fashion to what Honecker meant.

Peter Philipps

(Die Welt, Bonn, 7 October 1989)

Democracy Now aims to ditch the Brezhnev Doctrine

When the German Democratic Republic celebrated its 20th anniversary Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev said in East Berlin that the Soviet people's friendship with the GDR was fundamental.

He went on to say: "We are of the view that the greatest possible support for the peace-living socialist state of German workers is a joint matter for all socialist countries and is particularly so for those who have a real interest in permanent peace in Europe."

Brezhnev's successor, Mikhail Gorbachov, could not repeat these words at the East German 40th anniversary, for since the transition of power from Walter Ulbricht to Erich Honecker little has changed in East Germany whereas much has changed in the Soviet Union, Hungary and Poland.

Unlike Brezhnev, Gorbachov cannot speak for all the East Bloc states, and he does not even want to do so.

The Hungarian party leadership declined an invitation to East Berlin. There was a Polish delegation there, but it no longer represents the government in Warsaw, and so ranks below the party and state delegations from China, Vietnam, North Korea and Laos.

These are the states which gave sparkle to the official celebrations for East Germany's 40th anniversary — and that is an indication of East Germany's present standing.

But what is more important than the success of celebrations in East Berlin's "Palast der Republik" is the question how the citizens in East Berlin accept the celebrations, ordered by the state leadership, and how the leadership will deal with the people in the country over the next few weeks, a people from whom no republic as such has emerged.

The main point about the contrast which exists between the GDR and the realities is to be found in its genesis.

Just as the three Western powers stamped the part of Germany they occupied with democracy at the end of the Second World War, Moscow transferred the basics of the Stalinist dictatorship to the Soviet Occupied Zone, which were strengthened by the Brezhnev Doctrine, which limited the national sovereignty of the states in the socialist camp.

This happened before the 20th East German anniversary to justify the intervention of Warsaw Pact troops in Czechoslovakia.

When the GDR was established, shortly after the Federal Republic, the power apparatus of the Socialist Unity Party (SED) was identical with the government apparatus.

The East German constitution, just as the Federal Republic's Basic Law, guaranteed freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and association, but freedom does not exist.

All fundamental rights are subject to the reservations of political expediency. The collective has priority: the individual must adjust to the system.

As a sacrosanct principle of socialist society the constitution describes a fantastic image of the "firm union of the worker class with comrades in agriculture, members of the intelligentsia and other strata of society," and in addition a socialist planned economy.

This is where this state's weakness lies. The displeasure or opposition of the citizens was triggered off from the very beginning by two facts: the lack of personal and political freedom and living standards which were too low.

This led to East Germany's three most serious crises: the uprising of workers in East Berlin and East Germany in 1953, the erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961 and the exodus of East Germans to the West via Hungary, Prague and Warsaw in 1989.

Since the establishment of the German Democratic Republic three million people have left the country, because there was another German state close by.

A few thousand other refugees from a population of 16 million has shown clearly that people believe that fundamental changes must be introduced.

To them it is of no significance at all that East Germany is among the ten most important industrialised countries in the world, and that East Germany has the highest living standards of all countries governed by communist regimes.

Although economically most East German citizens have a better life now than they had previously the protest against living standards grows continuously.

The number of people who do not want to leave the country is greater than those who do, and they call openly for reforms.

When they make their demands they speak of living conditions which are regarded as requirements for the emergence of a free, democratic society as in the Federal Republic.

They want self-determination and the right to decide their own destiny even in a rough, pushy society with an inclination to egoism, even with all the *darker aspects* of a pluralistic society, but in glaring opposition to a unified state with the Socialist Unity Party and unpleasant class differences between the rulers and the ruled.

This is why the citizens' movement "Democracy Now" was the first to demand an end to the subordination of the state to the political bureacracy of the party, and an end to its political patronage.

This organisation wants free and secret elections, reform of parliament, the government, schools, the trades unions, industry, the arts and culture, a reform of the law, freedom of movement and a right to emigrate, and an end to *the politically*-controlled economy. In *short: a quite different German Democratic Republic.*

This movement regards its demands as proposals with the aim of gaining internal freedom in the country and in so doing serving external freedom.

That is the talk of reasonableness, the upsetting of the Brezhnev message of 20 years ago.

A theology lecturer in Leipzig has added to these demands ideas which stretch from truth, revolution and currency reform.

He calls for a future which aims at truth, in which fundamental rights, valid since the French Revolution, can be applied, and in which honest work is rewarded with good money, fundamentals which are recognised everywhere.

Here, then, GDR citizens are transformed by the confirmation of quite other values in the search lasting many decades for the recognition of a state still not established.

The GDR leadership wants to crush this radical change.

A reactionary posture of this sort is no cause for celebration, but rather greater caution is called for in dealing with a regime which is unpredictable due to its rigidity.

Rudolf Strauch

(Hannoversche Allgemeine, 7 October 1989)

■ **FLASHBACK**

Forty years in which the GDR's leaders have steadily forfeited credibility

DIE ZEIT

And if there is talk of intervention, then all we can say is: "Of course it is! We intend to intervene in everything that happens on German soil. It is our bounden duty to do so!"

These words are not Federal Chancellor Helmut Kohl's. Nor yet those of the late Franz Josef Strauss. Not even of Willy Brandt in the early 1960s.

They are taken from Walter Ulbricht's speech, as first secretary of the SED central committee, to the Fourth SED Congress in 1954.

Nowadays GDR newspapers criticise Western media coverage of people who have voted with their feet and left the state Ulbricht helped to found 40 years ago as "open intervention in the GDR's domestic affairs."

The history of the GDR is a succession of such contradictions and changes of course, a tale of promises that weren't kept and utopias that weren't put into practice, on all scales and at all levels.

The "socialist society" of which Herr Ulbricht proclaimed the development at the Seventh SED Congress in 1967 has remained a dream.

GDR society has remained firmly divided into rulers and subjects, and the gap between them is wider than ever.

How else can one account for the fact that even the distinguished East Berlin lawyer Wolfgang Vogel was unable to persuade GDR refugees to leave Bonn's embassies in Warsaw and Prague in return for a promise that they would be allowed to leave the GDR at a later date?

How else is one to account for the fact that *the* selfsame refugees, once they were finally allowed to travel by rail through the GDR to the West, had to be reassured of safe conduct by leading West German officials travelling with them?

The simple answer is that no-one trusts the GDR authorities any longer.

"It must look democratic," said Walter Ulbricht and his henchmen, "but we must have everything under firm control."

That was how they set up the immediate post-war civilian administration in the Soviet Zone and how they went on to forcibly merge the Communists (KPD) and Social Democrats (SPD) in 1946.

That was how they formed the Socialist Unity Party (SED) and put together the German Democratic Republic.

When the Prime Ministers of all German *Länder* met in Munich in June 1947, the Soviet Zone Prime Ministers of Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, Mecklenburg, Thuringia and Brandenburg took part but walked out of the conference on a pretext.

Wolfgang Leonhard (see article on page 10) later noted that an SED official had voiced doubts, saying: "A major opportunity of restoring German unity has been missed, yet Ulbricht has seldom been so pleased."

The decision had been reached by the Party, on Soviet advice. "Make a show of goodwill but practise obstruction" was the policy line.

It was adopted a good year after the forcible merger of the KPD and the SPD that Walter Ulbricht referred to at the inaugural SED party conference as a rebirth of the German working class movement.

The influence of former Social Democrats declined markedly. After the third SED congress, held in July 1950, the number of former Social Democrats in the politbureau was down to three.

And the purge early in 1951, during which over 150,000 Party members were expelled, hit former Social Democrats hardest.

They had failed to heed one of Ulbricht's proverbs: "Social Democratic members well know that he who goes to bed with the dogs will wake up with fleas."

The German working class movement had died in its infancy, or arguably in its Procrustean bed, at least in the GDR.

The sense of alienation from the SED felt by working people in the GDR came to head in July 1953, when a popular uprising occurred. It wasn't a popular uprising; it was an uprising of the working class.

There were demonstrations in 272 places, and Soviet troops had to be sent in to crush the uprising.

According to GDR statistics there were 25 dead and 378 injured, but these figures are definitely too low. Many injured demonstrators were taken to West Berlin hospitals.

At least 1,400 demonstrators were given stiff prison sentences. Twenty-two were executed.

The uprising was the result of numerous abrupt changes of course. As SED general secretary Erich Honecker wrote on the occasion of the GDR's 40th anniversary:

"Every party is responsible to its people and must do them justice. That is why we stated, over 40 years ago, that we had no intention of adopting the Soviet system unchanged in Germany."

That may formally be true, yet it is no less false.

At the end of 1945 the KPD endorsed the theory, outlined by Anton Ackermann, of a "specific German road to socialism." Developments in the Soviet Union were not simply to be imitated. This policy was later reversed.

Shortly before the SED was founded Ackermann had this to say to a KPD conference:

"The Socialist Unity Party will be an independent party because it will be entirely free in its decisions and because it does not regard the basic teachings of Marxism as an unbending dogma and will apply them to specific German conditions and to a specific German path of development."

Seven years later Ackermann was accused of anti-Party factionalism and stripped of all Party appointments. He was not rehabilitated until summer 1956 in the process of destalinisation.

That was when Walter Ulbricht answered a query by US journalist Daniel Schorr with regard to destalinisation in the GDR as follows:

"In a nutshell: there is no..., er, there was no Stalinism and there is no destalinisation."

In reality Stalinism was particularly marked in the GDR. Universal homage was paid to the "wise leader" Josef Stalin, and Erich Honecker was one of Stalin's most fervent admirers.

At the August 1951 international youth festival in Berlin he ended one of his speeches with the words:

"Long live the leader and standard-bearer of peace in the world, the teacher of young people in all countries, our beloved Josef Stalin!"

And on Stalin's death in March 1953 the SED proclaimed: "J. V. Stalin is no longer with us, but what he accomplished will live for ever. We promise to carry out what he has bequeathed to us to *the* utmost of our ability."

This personality cult was not even the worst aberration. Even worse, the specific German road to socialism was abandoned in favour of transforming the SED into a "new type of party."

That meant transforming it from a mass party to a cadre party, fighting "social democratism" and unconditionally acknowledging the leading role of the CPSU.

For the infant GDR it meant development in strict accordance with the example set by Soviet society and almost total adoption of the Soviet economic system. The after-effects of both are felt to this day.

When, after Stalin's death, a change of course was embarked on in the Soviet Union, the SED was most reluctant to follow suit.

Its "new course," which was intended to alleviate the consequences of post-haste nationalisation, collectivisation, the priority given to heavy industry and constant supply shortages, was nowhere near what would have been welcomed by workers annoyed by higher norms and higher prices.

It failed to stem the tide of the June 1953 uprising. The SED was obliged to promise a better supply of consumer goods. But the Party soon changed its tune, announcing that:

"The designation of corrections we undertook in some sectors in autumn 1953 as the New Course has led to some comrades spreading erroneous theories about the priority to be given to developing the consumer goods industry."

A few years later there was a further change of tune. Under pressure from the growing exodus of refugees (over 250,000 people a year were leaving the GDR), Ulbricht gave the following undertaking at the fifth SED congress in July 1958:

"Now our republic has already overtaken West Germany in per capita consumption of almost all foodstuffs, we aim by 1961-62 to equal and in some cases to exceed West Germany's per capita consumption of the leading industrial consumer goods."

This ambition had serious consequences. Investment capital was misdirected and economic disproportions were established. There were bottlenecks in supplies of materials and consumer goods.

Factories were brought to a standstill. Projects were abandoned and half-completed installations written off as "investment ruins."

The seven-year plan was scrapped and *the number of refugees again began to increase*. The SED leaders, daunted by economic and political failure, urged their comrades in Moscow to let them seal off the border with West Berlin.

Nikita Khrushchov agreed, but only after lengthy hesitation and when the situation steadily deteriorated.

On 13 August 1961 the border was first sealed off by barbed-wire emplacements, but the GDR authorities had already decided to build a wall, as shown by a slip of Walter Ulbricht's tongue at a press conference held two months earlier.

No-one noticed it at the time, but what the SED leader said, in answer to a question about the border, was:

"I understand your question to mean there are people in West Germany who want us to mobilise construction workers in the GDR capital to build a wall, is that so?... Well, no-one has any intention of building one."

Lies were part of his stock in trade. Ulbricht wasn't much interested in being popular or well-liked. He was a cold, dry apparatchik, and rightly felt to be a Soviet satrap.

And the moment he seriously objected to something the Soviet Union wanted, the Four-Power Agreement on Berlin, the Ulbricht era promptly ended and the Honecker era began.

Unlike today, it was clear who his successor would be, and a West German newspaper had this comment to make at the time:

"The political maturity of leading officials has for years been apparent from the extent of their despair at the prospect of Honecker and his limited political outlook."

It wasn't that bad. Honecker's world view is no more limited than Ulbricht's was. He has set keynotes of his own, such

Continued on page 13

Teenagers stoning Red Army tanks sent in to crush 17 June 1953 workers' uprising in the GDR. (Photo: Ullstein)

■ DEUTSCHLANDPOLITIK

Burden-sharing must be the bedrock of intra-German relations

The writer of this "Rheinischer Merkur/Christ und Welt" article, Professor Kurt Biedenkopf, is a national executive member of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and a member of the German Bundestag.

Helmut Schmidt is reputed to have coined the phrase that the Federal Republic of Germany is an economic giant but a political dwarf.

It may have been true in the past. Today, however, the post-war period is drawing to a close and with it the era in which the political significance and the political responsibility of the Federal Republic could be defined in this way.

In keeping with its true political and economic power our country must take part in shaping of a new European order and constructing the common European house.

Our neighbours in East and West know that the Federal Republic of Germany cannot permanently remain a state, and that the Germans cannot permanently remain a people, subjected to post-war constraints.

We arouse the mistrust of our neighbours *today* by trying to make ourselves look smaller than we are, not by acting in accordance with our true political significance and the resulting responsibility in Europe.

Part of our political responsibility for all Germans and for Europe is to develop initiatives on how to help shape the new European order above and beyond the framework of the European Community and Nato.

This particularly applies to the further development of the relationship between the two German states and to the future of Berlin.

By stating that the refugee problem is an intra-German affair the Soviet Union has already clarified that this is our responsibility.

It is a problem that cannot be resolved in isolation; it must be viewed within the framework of a longer-term all-German perspective.

Part of our political responsibility is to develop such a perspective and translate it into action. This is in the German *as well as* in the European interest.

In doing so we must bear in mind the following facts:

First, the post-war period is coming to an end. The political order of post-war Europe is losing its binding character.

The order of the post-war period has been the — successful and clearly demarcated — order of blocs.

It has guaranteed peace in Europe and still does so today. It ensures stability and predictability.

This explains why no-one has so far seriously tried to change it.

History, however, cannot be brought to a standstill. Existing contradictions cannot be permanently ignored or suppressed.

A contradiction to which this particularly applies is the ideological division of Europe and the suppression of human rights in Europe.

Beneath the cloak of the post-war order these contradictions have constantly grown.

The successes of the system of freedom in Western Europe, fostered by the European Community, and the political and economic decline in Eastern Europe have made these contradictions overwhelming.

Through his reform policy Mikhail Gorbachov has given way to them in the Soviet Union.

The political and economic revolution he has triggered has already spread to Poland and Hungary and can be expected to spread even further.

Its future course will be marked by setbacks, tension and crises. The process, however, is irreversible; a return to the previous status quo is impossible.

Second, the period of transition from the post-war order to an all-European peace order is a period of radical upheavals, changes and risks of tension and crises.

The predictability of political developments and the reliability of past experience are declining.

The continued existence of enormous military potentials in both parts of Europe remains a risk. For this reason a military safeguarding of peace will still be absolutely essential in future.

The *character* of the threat, however, is changing.

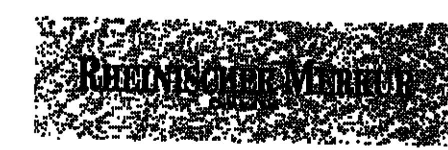
It no longer emanates from the ideologically rooted aggressiveness of a monolithic military bloc. The danger of military conflict today is caused by the risks connected with the radical changes inside the East bloc countries.

Nato must develop a new strategic concept which takes into account the new character of this threat.

This not only has implications for the planned modernisation of short-range systems.

The new concept must above all combine the military means of risk *limitation* with the economic means of risk *reduction.*

Cooperation with the East in the economic field and the development of



new political and social structures is part of peacekeeping in Europe. The associated burdens are also burdens of security policy.

Third, the end of the post-war period also marks the end of the previous justification of the division of Germany and thus the end of the *raison d'être* of the GDR.

● In terms of power politics the GDR was the keystone of the hegemonic structuring of Eastern Europe by the Soviet Union.

At the same time it was the cornerstone of the Warsaw Pact, the buckle of the Soviet security belt, and the Soviet Union's bridgehead in central Europe.

In the new European order the GDR will increasingly lose this security policy function.

● As opposed to Poland and Hungary the GDR does not possess a historical and national identity.

Its identity and hence its legitimation as a state are defined on the basis of anti-fascism and the implementation of socialism as a task of the state.

The reduction of ideological confrontation between the West and the East and the critical revision of the Stalin era have produced a situation in which the GDR is losing this ideological legitimation.

SED ideologist Otto Reinhold claimed that a "capitalist GDR," in other words a free GDR as we understand it, would forfeit its right to exist.

Reforms in the GDR, therefore, always affect the identity of the GDR and thus the justification for its existence. We must take this fact into account.

● The economic and technological significance of the GDR for the Soviet Union is declining.

In the past the Soviet Union above all acquired GDR technology in exchange for raw materials. Today it can sell its commodities in the West and also increasingly meet its technology needs there.

The GDR's former key role within the Comecon framework is being relativised to a growing extent by the opening up of borders. The Soviet Union's economic interest in the GDR, therefore, is also on the wane.

Fourth, the threefold (military policy, ideological and technological/economic) legitimation deficit is the biggest obstacle to the development of perspectives and the implementation of reforms.

Both are absolutely essential to stop the current exodus of refugees and eliminate social tension in the GDR.

A return to the post-war order and thus to Soviet responsibility for the GDR as a "zone of occupation" is out of the question.

The legitimation of the GDR and its political ability to act and effect reforms must be ensured as a partner in a European peace order.

There have been suggestions (by GDR emigré writer Stefan Heym, for instance) that the "true realisation of socialism" should be acknowledged as a task and as the basis of legitimation.

In view of the reforms in the Soviet Union, Poland and Hungary, however, and the lack of clarity about what this "true socialism" entails, this suggestion is hardly practicable.

What is practicable is to view everything listed as necessary by the Fifth Synod of the Association of Protestant Churches in the GDR in Eisenach in September and what the chairman of the Association, Bishop Leich, described as a task of state: political and economic changes.

Fifth, two things are necessary in order to make these reforms and changes possible.

The corresponding political framework must be created and the necessary economic conditions must be established. The Federal Republic of Germany is called upon to play its part.

The political framework includes a willingness to talk to and cooperate with all political and social forces in the GDR, including the state organs and the political leadership.

Discussions on ingratiation, dissociation or rapprochement in the West are neither fruitful nor appropriate for the dimension of this task.

In the past we all acted in accordance with the rules of the post-war order. We all need to gather experience with the necessities of a new order.

Everyone agreed to Social Democrat Erhard Eppler's call on 17 June 1989,

Kurt Biedenkopf (Photo: Poly-Press)

German Unity Day, to banish the word "betrayal" from political discussion. This still applies.

This includes the politically binding declaration that we do not want to change Poland's western *frontier*, in other words that we regard the *existing* frontier as permanent.

The creation of the *necessary* economic conditions *includes our willingness* to invest our *economic* power in the *common* restructuring of the GDR's economy and infrastructure.

Bishop Leich declared that the permeability of the borders between the Federal Republic of Germany and the GDR, which the Church welcomes, has revived an understandable question:

"Why has the outcome of a terrible war emanating from German soil had such different effects in the East and in the West of our fatherland?"

This question is one of the crucial questions of the intra-German relationship. What are the *political* and *moral* implications of the fact that the consequences of the catastrophe of 1945 were so unevenly distributed between the people in the two parts of Germany?

Freedom and prosperity on the one side, a lack of freedom and relative poverty on the other; support for reconstruction by the USA in the West and huge reparation payments to the Soviet Union and its permanent subsidisation within the Comecon framework in the East.

This uneven distribution of the consequences of war becomes an intolerable injustice if we refuse *to do our utmost* to redress the balance.

The first step *along* the road towards a realisation of human rights in the whole of Germany is the creation of comparable material living conditions in the whole of Germany.

What is taken for granted within the European Community must also apply to the intra-German relationship.

There is a need for both a European and an intra-German regional and structural policy.

Freedom and freedom of movement in the two German states without comparable living conditions would not lead to stability, but to new disharmonies and friction.

Once again our commitment and readiness to share the economic compensation for war-induced losses is a prerequisite for reforms in the GDR.

This includes the development of appropriate forms of economic cooperation, investment and the allocation of public funds, paving the way for the convertibility of currencies, and the adjustment of the social systems.

As in the European Community, the social dimension is also one of the decisive requirements for comparable living

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■ THE ECONOMY

East Germany on the brink of economic abyss as tens of thousands quit

Before Erich Honecker's era, which began in the early 1970s and is drawing to a close, the German Democratic Republic led a wretched existence, politically and economically.

The country was neither recognised in the world at large nor economically successful to any marked extent. It changed only gradually.

The smaller of the two German states was burdened at the beginning by tough reparations demands. Up to the end of 1953 the GDR had paid about $4.3bn in reparations to the Soviet Union and Poland.

For a time up to a quarter of the country's gross national product had to be deployed to this purpose.

But without these payments, which both German states called to a halt after economic difficulties and the July 1953 uprising in the GDR, the economic situation in the country was difficult enough.

According to the then Economic Affairs Minister, Heinrich Rau, a living economic entity had to be created out of a rump economy in eastern Germany.

Heavy industry lacked its backbone, being cut off from the coalmines and steelworks of the Rhine and the Ruhr. The West's steel embargo from February 1950 and the ensuing US ban on supplies of strategic materials did the rest.

These events of the past are still having their effect on the present. They explain, for instance, the GDR's continuous striv-

Süddeutsche Zeitung

ings for self-sufficiency, contrary to all economic sense and against the international trend of the division of labour.

Then there was the economic crisis at the end of 1952 and the beginning of 1953, which led to the 17 June 1953 uprising in the GDR.

In the following years economic development bobbed up and down. There was the open frontier, the flight of hundreds of thousands of skilled workers, the commuters across the dividing line — all this caused political and economic instability in the state.

According to Socialist Unity Party (SED) calculations, which are not very different from those by economists in the West, the losses caused by people fleeing to the West in the years between 1951 and 1961 amounted to a production loss of 112 billion marks.

To this could be added 16 billion marks for the cost of training those who fled the country.

One can question these figures and also recall the political causes for this mass flight of people. It is a fact, however, that economic recovery was severely harmed by the open frontier.

The "phenomenon" of the flight of tens of thousands in the GDR's 40th anniversary year cannot be compared to this, only the building of the Wall then and the closure of the frontier with Czechoslovakia now.

They are the last argument of a regime from which people are fleeing, people who are so urgently needed in the country.

If the SED examines the 40-year history of the GDR it must stress the Honecker era as proof of the economic efficiency of a socialist society.

And is it true that in the past two decades the greatest successes, politically and economically, have been achieved by the other German state?

The historical parallels which emerge with the ending of the Honecker era are interesting. When, about 20 years ago, he got ready to oust his political foster-father, Walter Ulbricht, the GDR was again in an extremely complicated economic situation.

It is worthwhile taking a closer look at this period, for many of the economic problems and difficulties which then erupted and waited to be solved are again present 20 years later. Naturally at a different qualitative level and not to the last detail, but still very similar.

All that is lacking is the final act which decides on Erich Honecker's fate.

By the end of the 1960s the difficulties in the economy had increased enormously, and they did not change at the approach of the 1970s.

There were, indeed, considerable growth rates. The national economy moved over the 100-billion-mark level, but the people participated in this less and less.

Today the figure is gradually approaching 300 billion marks and again people are dissatisfied.

There has been an increase in mechanisation and automation in industry. There are between 80,000 and 90,000 robots working in East German industry, which is proud of the fact that more than 70,000 CAD/CAM computers are used in GDR companies.

Then such branches of industry as electronics, machine tools and chemicals were developed faster than other industrial sectors. That is still the case today.

There are also parallels to be drawn with the guarantees of social benefits. According to the statistics then, and now, everything seems to be growing enormously. The only snag is that then, as now, many of these statistics were rubbish.

The parallels make it possible to get closer to the facts. At the end of the 1960s there was considerable disproportion in the economy which detracted dangerously from its development.

The ancillary supplies sector, engineering tools, plant construction and the manufacturing of consumer goods were stagnating and did not meet the enormous demand, which was growing.

A glance at the balances for 1988 shows that it is just these sectors which did not fulfill their quotas.

In the ancillary supplies sector alone there was a shortfall in production of 2.5 billion marks. The supply failure in sophisticated consumer goods has been a continuous problem.

Industrial construction, far too weak, showed itself to be in arrears to the tune of 1.3bn marks in 1987 and no change in the trend was visible in 1988.

At peak periods there were also deficiences in energy supplies, which could only be offset by imports from the Federal Republic and Austria.

Professor Naumann, an East Berlin scientist, wrote about this period:

"The economy should then have gained in tempo and productivity in view of the scientific-technical revolution, because of the commencement of a number of automation schemes. But despite major efforts the considerable scientific-technical backwardness in the GDR became greater."

This comment can be used to characterise present efforts. The 179 automation schemes which were in operation in 1970 surpassed the powers of the economy at that time and were either not feasible or did not have the planned effect.

Of 42 automation systems, which have been analysed and which should be completed in the metalworking industries alone by 1990, 37 were below their objective and caused high costs.

Professor Naumann recalled that increasing disproportion in the economy hampered development as a whole. He said:

"Many companies did not fulfill their plan in 1970 despite overtime and Sunday shifts. The production of goods, work productivity and exports remained below the objectives laid down for 1970. Difficulties in supplies increased."

At the end of 1988 the picture was the same. Almost a quarter of all schemes planned did not reach their objectives, to say nothing of the critical supply situation in the 40th anniversary year, 1989.

In the early 1970s economic failure brought about social and political unrest. Honecker replaced Ulbricht in the leadership.

The 7th SED Party Conference decided in 1971 on the course of "the unity of economic and social policies."

Günter Mittag, at that time "technical officer," who had considerably influenced economic policies, survived.

It would be too simple to think that present difficulties and problems in the economy could be attributed to the rigid posture of two politicians. It is true, however, that their ideas have moulded the GDR society for the past 20 years.

The *Kommandowirtschaft*, the controlled economy, set up by Mittag and approved by Honecker, did not solve such inconsistencies as limited innovation powers, disproportions in the economy, supply bottlenecks or the dangerous violation of the achievement principle, and particularly the growing inefficiency in the economy as a whole.

But the Party jealously insists on its monopoly position, and alone determines the concepts and contents of development.

In this way the party does not allow freedom for innovative thinking. This means that false decision-making and a loss of efficiency in the future is programmed into the system.

The SED, in the 40th anniversary year of the German Democratic Republic, at the turn into the next decade and just before the 12th Party Conference, is in a dilemma.

The lack of confidence in the party is greater than ever. And this loss of confidence is not just due to the unsuccessful economy.

More than 100,000 emigrants and refugees this year have testified to it. And the 16.5 people waiting and watching are also doing this in their own way.

Steffen Uhlmann

(Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich, 9 October 1989)

■ TRADE

East-West trade ties in Germany and Europe

The GDR is a Comecon member, but has always enjoyed special status in the European Community. Will it still do so in the post-1992 single European market?

The single European market is not far off: it should be set up by the end of 1992. Many countries would like to join the European Community and have more or less formally applied to do so. They include Austria, Cyprus, Malta, Morocco, Norway and Turkey.

But European Commission president Jacques Delors is not particularly eager to know about this at the present. Aides close to him say he believes the Community can only expand after the year 2000.

Apart from the many difficulties which stand in the way of an economic union and a common European currency, relations between the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament have to undergo change. Only then, in Jacque Delors' opinion, can the European Community be extended further.

But there are unmistakable rumblings in the German camp. Tens of thousands of GDR citizens are moving into the Federal Republic, a European Community member-state.

Jacques Delors has always kept to the Roman tradition and had a vision of ancient Europe round the Mediterranean.

Bonn Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, however, has come up with an East-West Europe, which he would like to see in his Europe Plan.

In the mid-1980s relations between the European Community and Comecon began to change after a long period of stagnation. The German Democratic Republic is a member of Comecon, the East bloc's Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA).

In the very first phase the Comecon states rejected the Community, but this was overcome at the beginning of the 1970s and there was a period of tough, long and unsuccessful negotiations. These talks faltered on the German Question.

Brussels regards West Berlin as part of the Community, a view which the Comecon states cannot condone.

Then Mikhail Gorbachov was elected general secretary of the Soviet Communist Party. From the outset he showed the political will for change. So consultations between the European Community and Comecon were reopened.

When in May last year Mr Gorbachov acknowledged that an agreement between the Community and the Comecon states must include West Berlin, the way was opened for this joint declaration.

This declaration symbolised the official opening of relations between the two economic systems.

Since early this year Ingo Öster has been accredited as ambassador to the European Community on behalf of the GDR.

The Community is conducting special talks with the GDR and the Commission is almost on the point of laying before the Council of Ministers proposals for a negotiating position.

But up to the present the Commission has not forwarded its proposals to the Council of Ministers. The Commission saw no reason to hurry matters along in view of East Berlin's attitude toward the events on Tienanmen Square in Peking and the refugee problem.

If the political situation had improved there would have been an agreement by the end of this year.

It can be assumed with some certainty that the events of the past few days have resulted in the GDR getting, belatedly, a textiles and fisheries agreement for the country's 40th anniversary, which East Berlin wanted badly.

Although no preference was given to the GDR in negotiations with the European Community, the GDR has always been in a special position.

The German Democratic Republic is not a third country in the European Community sense of the term. This is defined in an additional protocol to the Treaties of Rome about intra-German trade.

GDR products can enter the Federal Republic under special conditions, and intra-German trade will not be affected by the Comecon agreement.

In this additional provision the Federal Republic accepted the obligation, however, not to reexport GDR goods to other member-states.

Even so, GDR imports are exported to other European Community countries, although the Federal Economic Affairs Ministry in Bonn says they amount to only about 0.7 per cent.

That is an insignificant 0.02 per cent of the Federal Republic's exports to other European Community member-states.

The Dutch Economic Affairs Ministry refused to approve the import of ball-point pens made in the GDR. But in a case brought before the European Court of Justice the validity of intra-German trade arrangements was confirmed.

In a 21 September 1989 ruling the Court ruled that the other member-states did not have the right to reject goods imported from the Federal Republic but of GDR origin.

The Court said that only in rare exceptions could the economy of a member-state be endangered by the reexport by the Federal Republic of merchandise of GDR origin.

In view of the scale of the trade the Court could see no danger to the Dutch economy. The Court confirmed that the GDR is not a third country for the Federal Republic.

The single European market in 1992 would not change the continuation of intra-German trade.

Because border checks would no longer apply, technical adjustments to checking GDR exports would be necessary. But no-one at present sees in this a serious problem.

Several East bloc states are more or less openly seeking contacts with the European Community. But the participants at the 44th Comecon conference in Prague in the summer seemed agreed on creating a "common socialist internal market." The only country that did not go along with this was Rumania.

After his return from Prague to deal with the refugee problem, Foreign Minister Genscher spoke on the radio of a Europe Plan that would reawaken the Continent's sense of identity.

He was certainly aiming his remarks at Mr Gorbachov. Herr Genscher knows that politics gets nowhere on slogans alone, so he added that it should be more a programme like the Eureka research project, open to companies in the East and the West.

He said that the Coordinating Committee for East-West Trade list, which limited not only the export of arms but also high-technology goods, had to be sorted out.

At the present too much is in flux to say with any precision at present where European Community-Comecon contacts are heading.

Extensive European political understanding, referring equally to the East and the West, is necessary in reference to EC policies and the single European market.

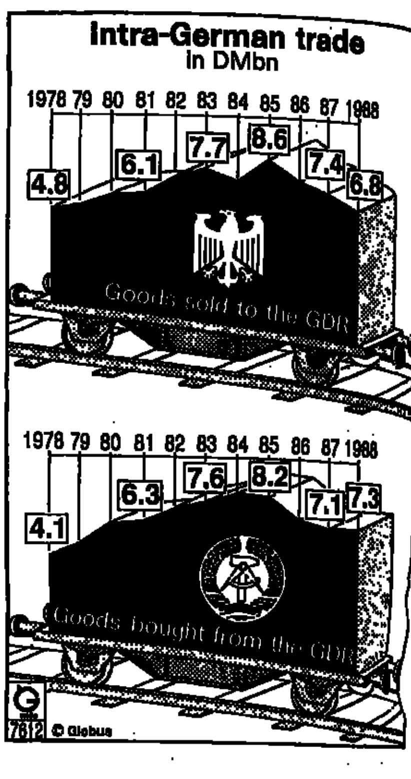
The other 11 members of the Community obviously regard with discomfort the renewed flare-up of German discussions about reunification.

The mid-life crisis the German Democratic Republic is experiencing at 40 is bound to affect European policy.

Perhaps that isn't so bad, perhaps a renewed initiative in the history of European unity policy, for "the development of fantasies," as Herr Genscher would put it.

Hortense Hörburger

(Deutsches Allgemeines Sonntagsblatt, Hamburg, 6 October 1989)



Bonn offers East Berlin aid in return for reforms

Bonn is prepared to give "extensive and wide-ranging" support to the GDR "in all sectors where this is conceivable." With the agreement of his coalition partners and the SPD, Chancellor Helmut Kohl has confirmed this offer, should the SED leadership in the GDR decide to embark on reforms. The offer mainly envisages measures on projects for technological renewal of East German industry and the extension of consumer goods production in the German Democratic Republic.

Chancellor Kohl pointed out that reforms were necessary because then the payments the Federal Republic already makes to the GDR would be "economically more effective."

These payments are considerable. They give the GDR an enormous hard currency advantage over other socialist countries.

This year alone payments by Bonn amounted to DM829m. They will increase next year to DM1.25bn. The largest item among the long-term benefits are the transit charges on the autobahns through the GDR to West Berlin.

They are based on a 1971 agreement and amount to DM525m annually. Over the period 1990 to 1999 they will be increased to DM860m annually.

To this can be added an annual flat rate for road tolls in the GDR which from 1990 onwards will be increased from DM50m to DM55m so that the GDR is guaranteed a deutschemark income of more than ten billion marks up to the end of the century.

The GDR has committed itself, on the other hand, to use DM60m of this



total for extending the frontier crossing points and repairing the autobahn between Berlin and Hof or Herleshausen, which is urgently needed.

The Federal Republic also contributes to the extension of the rail network and the running costs for the railways. This year it plans to spend DM32.5m on this, to be increased to DM36.5m in the coming years.

The federal postal service ensures a regular deutschemark income with a flat rate postal charge. This year the GDR postal service will benefit to the tune of DM221.5m (including telecommunications).

This posts item will increase to DM224.1m in 1990. The West German postal service is also involved in investments in the GDR — among other things for the laying of an optical cable to Berlin at a cost of DM35m.

Between 1972 and 1988 the Bonn government has provided the GDR with hard currency amounting to DM11.525bn. The money is well spent for it not only benefited people in the GDR but also the Federal Republic of Germany.

It includes the DM270m provided for the repair and extension of the inland waterways from and to Berlin, for example, and the DM386m which it is planned to invest in environmental protection projects in the GDR and East Berlin up to 1993.

Taxpayers' money is also used for humanitarian purposes, for what is usually spoken of as the ransom of prisoners. Substantial sums are spent on securing the release of detainees in GDR jails.

It is impossible to put an exact figure on this because official statistics are not released, but it involves several million marks, usually paid not in cash but in supplies which in their turn benefit the Federal Republic's economy.

The same is true for the quasi-membership status of the GDR in the European Community, which comes about due to the special economic relationship the German Democratic enjoys with the Federal Republic.

The advantage of this piggy-back system comes directly to the benefit of Federal Republic purchasers of GDR goods.

But this helps the GDR economy in that the country can sell goods which would otherwise be unsaleable on the European Community market.

Apart from public finances visitors to the GDR have to pay generously. It is estimated in Bonn that in 1989 the GDR will make something like DM450m from the compulsory sums that have to be exchanged crossing into East Germany and a further DM50m from visa charges.

Eghard Mörbitz

(Frankfurter Rundschau, 11 October 1989)

■ EXODUS

GDR can ill afford to lose mainly young refugees

One of the results of 40 years of the GDR is that well over 100,000 people will have left the socialist German state this year by one means or another.

This figure may seem insignificant when compared with the GDR's population of 16.6 million, and representatives of the SED, the ruling Socialist Unity Party, take pains to make light of the repercussions of this year's exodus.

They argue that the deserters are a minority and that the GDR can readily do without several hundred thousand people.

Even so, the SED central committee saw fit to suspend passport- and visa-free travel to Czechoslovakia in order to stem the tide of refugees during the *GDR's 40th anniversary celebrations.*

Economic considerations will have weighed no less heavily in persuading the GDR authorities to arrive at this decision. Alarming reports were certainly flooding in from fields, factories and workshops.

The refugees have punched holes all over the GDR's thin manpower cover, gaps that cannot be filled at short notice.

A long-term mass exodus would have unforeseeable consequences for the GDR's economy.

As the managing director of an East Berlin works combine put it on GDR television, every working person who left for the West left a gap that could only be bridged by others doing more work.

That isn't always possible. Overtime has increased by leaps and bounds in recent weeks, yet services have still had to be restricted.

Shops and restaurants have been shut. The opening hours of health and other services have been reduced. Public transport services have been less frequent.

Deutsche Reichsbahn, the GDR railways, desperately short of train drivers, attendants and marshalling yard staff, announced that administrative manpower was to be drastically reduced.

Railway staff were to be transferred to plug the most serious manpower shortages.

Rationalisation has assumed overriding importance throughout the economy, not just in transport. No matter how loud factories hollered for manpower, there was nothing that could be done to help them, said Ernst Timm, first secretary of the Rostock SED region, at a Party conference.

Manpower wasn't to be had at any price. Many SED and FDJ (Free German Youth) officials in government and industry were shocked to learn that refugees or would-be refugees are mainly young people.

The dissatisfaction felt beneath the surface by young people has evidently been totally underestimated.

Referring to the exodus of young people in particular, FDJ leader Eberhard Aurich admitted at the GDR's National Health Conference that the FDJ would have to look into questions such as:

- "whether we have been to blame for such personal decisions on how people want to live, decisions so damaging to us all;
- whether we have said nothing when we ought to have said something;
- whether talking with each other would have been better."

This new approach gives rise to hope that the leaders of the state youth organisation may have come to realise how serious the situation is and to act accordingly.

The mass exodus of young people hits the SED regime particularly hard, partly because it has always seen and portrayed itself as "a state for young people" and partly because the GDR is more dependent than ever on young people if it is not to sink in scientific and technological competition with the West.

Young people are already in short supply in many trades and industries. Low birth-rate years are now leaving school, with the result that numbers of school-leavers taking up apprenticeships are declining drastically.

Intra-German living standards
Comparative figures for 1987

	Fed. Rep. Germany	GDR
Earnings (Monthly take-home pay per household): Employed person	4 145 DM	2 066 DM*
Earnings (Monthly take-home pay per household): Pensioner	2 566 DM	780 DM*
Mod. cons. (per 100 households): Car	95	50
Mod. cons. (per 100 households): Colour TV	91	47
Mod. cons. (per 100 households): Telephone	97	16
Housing (m² per person)	36 sq.m.	27 sq.m.

*In purchasing power

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In 1990 there will only be half as many apprentices as in 1980. The shortage is particularly marked, and on the increase, in industry and the building trades, while in agriculture too young people are often not available in sufficient number.

Industry will soon face a growing shortage of scientists and technologists as the supply dries up with fewer and fewer young people leaving school.

Professor Manfred Lötsch of the Academy of Social Sciences says the number of newly qualified scientists and technologists will by the mid-1990s be down to 30 or 40 per cent of their 1974-75 peak, while large numbers of scientists and technologists will reach retirement age in the 1990s.

That means the GDR's chances of narrowing the scientific and technological gap between it and the West will be bound to deteriorate due to the shortage of youngsters leaving school to take over from their elders.

There is already a serious manpower shortage in industrial research departments.

The GDR can't afford a mass exodus of young people and couples with children for demographic and population structure reasons either.

The birth rate has been on the decline again since the early 1980s, a wide range of incentives having triggered only a temporary "baby boom."

The last boom year was 1980, with 245,000 births. Last year only 215,000 babies were born in the GDR.

By the year 2000 GDR experts expect live births to decline still further to 180,000 a year as low birth-rate age groups reach child-bearing age.

The latest GDR health service yearbook shows East Germans to be reproducing at only 80 per cent of, let us say, the replacement rate.

GDR demographers feel this is a level below which the birth rate ought not, in the interest of population trends, to be allowed to fall. But it might yet do so if the exodus continues.

Parents have not been having the two children they need to replace themselves, as it were, since 1971-72, with the result that the average age of the population has increased markedly in recent years.

The number of children is declining as a percentage, while the number of middle-aged and old people is increasing, making the age-group hour-glass top-heavy.

East Berlin forecasts expect this trend to continue until the year 2010. So the GDR must do all it can to keep young people in the country.

Young people, not an ageing politburo, are the guarantee of a future for the GDR.

Closing the border is not the way to set about it. Social conditions must ensure greater leeway for personal freedom of young people and be such that they feel able to identify themselves with them.

Michael Mara

(Der Tagesspiegel, Berlin, 7 October 1989)

Continued from page 3

force, since getting rid of it is not likely in the foreseeable future.

On the other hand the posture of the Federal Republic is a determining factor. The Federal Republic has not the slightest cause to recognise any of the GDR interpretations of a GDR citizenship. These interpretations would only be useful for shackling their own citizens.

But the Federal Republic has every reason for respecting the responsibility of East German citizens for their own affairs.

It is not the GDR as such, which is celebrating officially an anniversary, but *this* GDR, talked about until now by church people, opposition outsiders and those who have pointedly decided to remain.

This other GDR is really the object of the review of 40 years' history of the other part of Germany. One can only speculate about its weight and strength.

But it is certainly true that the GDR only has a future if this other, minority, GDR eventually has the chance of playing its role in political and social life.

Hermann Rudolph

(Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich, 7 October 1989)

■ EAST BERLIN

Anniversary counter-demo takes police by surprise

"What's going on here? Is this Kreuzberg?" asked a woman leaving Schönhauser Allee station in East Berlin's Prenzlauer Berg borough just before midnight on 7 October.

She was appalled by what she saw. It was like footage she'd seen on TV of the riots in Kreuzberg in West West Berlin.

Hundreds of men in uniform had hermetically sealed off the streets in front of the station.

The *Volkspolizei* (people's police) had been reinforced by crack soldiers from an elite guards regiment which normally stands guard in front of the Council of State building when ambassadors are accredited. They were joined later by workers' militia units.

The workers' militia groups, which wear a standard military uniform, were formed in all business enterprises in the GDR after the 1953 workers' uprising.

They consist of regular employees and have the task of protecting property and the borders of the GDR.

More recently, they have also been trained to combat internal unrest. Many enterprises are reputed to be extremely reluctant to take part in such operations.

The deployment of these militia groups against demonstrators in East Berlin, the first time this has ever happened, had everyone worried.

Even people who had up until then simply watched events in silence started shouting "Traitors of the Working Class."

The hundreds of men in uniform were supported by a whole army of civilian security forces.

Furthermore, three water cannons had been brought into position. A fourth water cannon was on standby.

Uniformed and civilian security forces stood on every corner of the streets leading off Schönhauser Allee in order to cordon off the area extensively if necessary, as they had already done earlier that evening.

Their main job, however, was to prevent demonstrators from joining the fray from different directions.

The biggest demonstration East Berlin had seen since the workers' revolt in 1953 began quite harmlessly.

A few members of civil rights groups gathered on Alexanderplatz, where a big public festival was taking place at the time, to publicly protest against the local elections held on May 7.

The groups had done this every month since the election, claiming that the results were rigged.

October 7, however, was a special day. Not far from the location of this demonstration Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachov was talking to the Communist party general secretaries who had come to East Berlin to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the GDR.

The demonstrators were soon surrounded — by both state security forces and journalists from all over the world.

For quite some time everyone remained silent and motionless. Apparently unflustered by all this an entertainer nearby went on singing typical Berlin songs.

Many of the passers-by also failed to sense that something was in the air. They just stared at the crowd of people and walked by eating their ice-cream or bockwurst.

It was only after 5 p.m., as the crowd started to chant "Gorbi, Help Us" and "Freedom," that the whole affair turned into a protest march.

The number of protesters grew rapidly as people who were previously no more than festival visitors joined in and also began to chant.

Over a thousand people made their way towards the Palace of the Republic, where a big farewell reception was planned for official guests at 6 p.m.

Shortly before they got there, however, the demonstrators were confronted by a hastily formed police cordon.

Although the GDR government expected protest it had not apparently expected such a spontaneous accumulation of people.

Both the security forces and the demonstrators seemed unorganised.

The shouts of "Gorbi, Come Out" and "We're Staying Here" became louder and louder, but the demonstrators had no choice but to beat a retreat towards Alexanderplatz.

By this time several thousand people had joined the demonstration, most of them young East Germans, marching through East Berlin's city centre.

Chanting "Come Out into the Streets" and "New Forum" they made their way to the building of the official GDR news agency, ADN.

It was here that the security forces stepped in after demonstrators started to shout "Democracy, Democracy," "Liars, Liars" and "Freedom of the Press, Freedom of the Press."

The spokesmen were dragged into a courtyard. After the crowd gathered in front of the courtyard and voiced their anger more and more threateningly by shouting "No Violence" things took a very fast turn for the worse.

Some demonstrators had blood streaming down their faces after being hit over the head with rubber truncheons, others were dragged away.

Police seemed to come from all directions. Lorries with huge barriers were parked along the streets.

Many of those who had joined the demonstration on the spur of the moment tried to escape.

A "hard core" was pushed back in a northerly direction, but was not willing to be intimidated. It made its way to the Gethsemane church in the Prenzlauer Berg district, where a permanent vigil was being kept for people arrested during the Leipzig demonstrations.



Eyeball-to-eyeball on the streets of East Berlin.

About a thousand people gathered in front of the church. Even more would have come if the police had not cordoned off all access roads.

Those inside of the encircled area were unable to get out, whereas those outside stood no chance of getting in.

Gottfried Forck, the bishop of Berlin-Brandenburg, who had rushed along to the church, successfully asked the police to let the people leave the church forecourt in small groups without being arrested.

Some left the area, whereas others reassembled on the corner in front of Schönhauser Allee station.

They started to sing *So ein Tag, so wunderschön wie heute* (Oh what a beautiful day, today), their contribution to the GDR's birthday celebrations.

Although there were only about two hundred demonstrators left and they were surrounded by hundreds of police they refused to budge, either sitting or standing on the street.

Individual demonstrators were carried away, others hit with truncheons.

Roughly two hours after midnight the remaining demonstrators were encircled and then dragged into lorries and buses.

Some of the demonstrators who tried to escape by climbing over the fence onto the railway tracks behind were also arrested.

Workers' militia groups had even gathered along the tracks.

With the help of hundreds of security and police force members the East German state was finally able, with tremendous difficulty, to come to grips with the spontaneous protest.

The unrest which is being articulated throughout the GDR, however, will probably become even louder and more discernible — at least for all those who are not deaf and blind to everything which is happening around them. Like the state and party leadership in the GDR, for example.

Only Erich Honecker and his cronies apparently believe that the huge torchlight procession which the Freie Deutsche Jugend (FDJ), the Communist youth organisation, "stage-managed" on the eve of the anniversary is a reflection of what East German youth really thinks.

Hundreds of thousands of members of the FDJ, with their traditional blue shirts, marched past the VIP rostrum for two hours.

Although the figure was impressive it probably reminded many onlookers that just as many young people have left the country this year alone because they have lost all hope of any change for the better in the GDR.

Those who still hope celebrated their state's 40th birthday in different ways.

Whereas some people took to the streets to demonstratively wave torches for the state, demonstrators of the same age took to the same streets one day later in anger at conditions in the GDR.

On the same evening as the torchlight procession, which was modelled on the procession which took place in 1949, two thousand mainly young people gathered in the Erlöserkirche for what they called a "Workshop of the Future."

As opposed to the scenes on the streets their aim was not confrontation, but the search for mutual understanding.

"What now, GDR?" This question, which is currently preoccupying the minds of many in the Federal Republic of Germany, was also the key question of the discussion.

The various opposition groups now emerging in the GDR wanted to at least practise what their counterpart, the state, has refused for so long: dialogue.

Even though the discussion led to a joint resolution the course of the evening showed how difficult it is to talk after decades of imposed silence.

Soon after the discussion began everything seemed confused in the overcrowded church.

Whereas some people, not, as it were, looking forward in anger, concentrated on a better future, others emphasised a proper appraisal of the past.

As no-one in the church sided with the motto put out by Erich Honecker in his anniversary speech, "Ever Forwards — Never Backwards", the discussion went round in circles.

Discussions are only just beginning in the GDR. They will continue — as will, it is to be feared, demonstrations.

After forty years an avalanche has been set in motion which can no longer be stopped by water cannons and truncheons.

Monika Zimmermann

(Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland, 9 October 1989)

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account of their work for these objectives. They demanded the release of detainees, the waiving of sentences passed and the quashing of cases in progress or under investigation.

Their "enormous potential of specialised knowledge" was, they felt, urgently needed for social renewal. "You lay claim to the leading role," they said in an appeal to members of the ruling SED. "Play it!"

Demands for change must no longer exclude even a single trade union election or plan debate by the works assembly.

People must insist on being told the unvarnished truth, the full facts of the case, and on all decisions being reached in public.

"Careerists must be voted out and honest workmates elected to replace them."

The state and Party leadership and the trades union confederation have been inundated with messages and resolutions from local SED branches, factories and institutions making these very demands.

In East Berlin trade union officials at VEB Bergmann-Borsig and Berliner Bremswerke submitted resolutions to the trade union executive, while staff at four University Hospital clinics, from chief surgeons to nurses, wrote to the SED central committee and the Health Ministry.

In the arts companies of several theatres have called for changes in media policy, with notices on billboards and petitions for which signatures are being collected.

They warn against criminalising people who hold views that differ from those of the powers that be and voice hopes of a "comprehensive dialogue between the state and Party leadership and the people."

Peter Nöldechen

(General-Anzeiger, Bonn, 9 October 1989)

■ THE PRESS

Print media sound note of criticism

Unprecedented, no-holds-barred self-criticism in GDR newspapers has included the following comment in the Dresden CDU daily *Die Union:*

"Information about the events of recent days and nights in the city centre of Dresden, including our own coverage yesterday, was onesided and conveyed a wrong impression."

The copy it saw fit to criticise was an official Press release that had evidently been reprinted without further ado.

Demonstrators who had called for more democracy in connection with the GDR's 40th anniversary were accused of hooliganism and unconstitutional acts that were hostile toward the state.

In the wake of its 40th anniversary the GDR seems to have embarked on a spate of glasnost.

Views differ between newspapers, issues that used to be taboo are suddenly aired in public and journalists are objecting to a uniformity of media coverage that hasn't seemed to worry them in the past. Government control of the flow of information has grown particularly unpopular with newspapers published by parties other than the ruling Socialist Unity Party (SED).

The most daring move was by *Neue Zeit*, the East Berlin CDU daily, which used reported speech in quoting the official news agency, ADN.

"Members of the People's Police are said to have been attacked with stones, bottles and firebrands," the paper wrote, attributing the claim to the agency.

At the same time it deleted a reference to demonstrators as rowdies and criminals in the Interior Ministry Press release quoted by ADN.

Newspapers were agreed in calling for a dialogue between the state and its unwelcome and no doubt inconvenient critics.

Many readers' letters echoed the words of councillor Gerd Gordalla, writing to the *Leipziger Volkszeitung:*

"If we want to change things, which we do, then what we now need is an atmosphere in which dialogue and joint activity are the keynotes."

In *Neue Zeit* Otto Wuttke of Dresden is quoted as being disappointed that the newspaper had only seen fit to print a single ADN commentary on the mass exodus of GDR citizens to the West.

Christian Democrats could not afford to arrogantly claim that not a tear need be shed for the refugees. "We ought at least to consider why they left," he writes.

In the *Sächsische Zeitung* Erwin Lawrenz, an SED member employed at the Robotron works in Dresden, is quoted as saying:

"In my view it would be good if the Party were to give a clear answer to the events, to the questions and to the problems which concern us and which we have constantly raised.

"To behave as though they didn't exist does not strengthen our ranks; it weakens them."

GDR newspapers are suddenly sounding a most unaccustomed note, self-critically calling for an open media policy. In *Tribüne*, the daily newspaper of the FDGB, the East Berlin trades union confederation, actress Ursula Werner writes:

"We are alarmed about the contradiction between the portrayal of our reality in official speeches and the media and the reality as we daily experience it."

Confidence had declined markedly, which was most alarming. A number of theatres had commented to this effect in statements on noticeboards in their foyers, she noted.

Manfred Wekwerth, president of the GDR Academy of Arts and SED central committee member, complains in the East Berlin LDPD daily *Der Morgen* of misleading terminology used in the media when negatives can no longer be avoided.

Techniques have been devised to make sure that the truth is never said. "Bad" is said to be "not yet good." Poor work is taken as an occasion for an appeal to work "even better."

Leipzig student Jens Richle sounds a reflective note in *Junge Welt*, the Free German Youth daily, saying that several hundred SED members had attended the Monday evening "peace service" in Leipzig's Nikolaikirche.

After the service 70,000 people had taken to the streets in a demonstration for more democracy.

Inside the church there had been an "amazing atmosphere of mutual agreement on current social problems."

While the SED newspaper indicates readiness to engage in a dialogue with people holding different views in this case, it rules out talks with lawyer Rolf Henrich of the largest GDR Opposition group, New Forum, on the country's future.

Henrich's name (he used to be an SED official but was expelled from the party when his book *Der vormundschaftliche Staat* was published in the West) has yet to be mentioned by the media.

Ingomar Schwelz/AP

(Hannoversche Allgemeine, 12 October 1989)

GDR leaders forfeit credibility

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as easing restrictions on the arts, improving living conditions for shift workers and large families and — as a result of detente and the intra-German Basic Treaty — gained worldwide recognition of the GDR.

He pursued a policy of demarcation as a counterweight to the foreign policy opening. It was a policy fraught with points on which clarification was needed.

He proclaimed good-neighbourly relations with the Federal Republic yet stated, at the same time, that: "Our view of the enemy is absolutely right."

SED propagandists drew subtle distinctions between GDR citizenship, the socialist nation and German nationality. But people in the GDR seemed to come to terms with the state and to make use of the niches it provided.

For a while Herr Honecker, unlike his predecessor, enjoyed a measure of popularity in the GDR. People referred to him as "Our Erich."

At the eighth SED congress, held shortly after he had assumed power, he said:

"We know only one aim. The entire policy of our party is permeated by the desire to do all we can for the good of the individual, for the happiness of the people, in the interest of the working class and of all working people."

Many people in the GDR believed he meant it at the time. No-one takes him seriously now when he says:

"Socialism is the only social system in which the individual can be an individual, in which human work and initiative benefit the people and are not abused."

Like Ulbricht in his day, Honecker at the end of his era is no longer aware of the shape trends are taking. He has forfeited the goodwill he once enjoyed.

Established dogmas are coming apart at the seams. The leading role of the Party has degenerated to a state of leaderlessness.

The Soviet Union as a model is viewed with suspicion by the SED at the very moment much of the population have, for the first time, come to see what is going on in Moscow as an example to be followed.

More and more fraternal socialist countries are behaving in a manner the SED is bound to see as anything but fraternal.

The "socialist community" is breaking up. The "advanced socialist society" Honecker proclaimed at the eighth Party congress has gone on to the retreat.

Tens of thousands of young people who have never known any other system have turned their back on the "socialist nation."

What is more, once they are in the West they refer to the (Soviet) "Zone" on the one hand and "Germany" on the other.

Intentionally or unintentionally, SED ideologist Otto Reinhold has called the GDR's very identity into question in saying that a non-socialist GDR would naturally have no justification for a separate existence.

Economic policy mistakes have set the GDR back years on several occasions. They mainly include the emphasis on heavy industry, an ill-advised fuel and power policy, the nationalisation of trades and crafts, the industrialisation of agriculture and the strict distinction between animal and vegetable products.

Other ill-advised ideas have included the repeated reorganisation of industry and the establishment of monopoly-style combines, the permanent neglect of infrastructure and old building stock and, last but not least, subsidies run riot.

As director of the GDR Academy of Social Sciences, Otto Reinhold says the key issue of the years to come will be the development of productive forces.

The leeway for a solution to domestic problems will depend on their progress alone, he argues.

The exact opposite is true. As long as the GDR's domestic problems are not specified and tackled, as long as people feel they are not regarded as capable of deciding for themselves, as long as they see the powers that be as arrogant, not to be trusted and incapable of self-criticism or change, productive forces in the GDR will not develop even moderately satisfactorily.

GDR newspapers now say not a tear need be shed for those who have left the country. The extent to which they are missed remains to be seen.

Since the GDR was founded 40 years ago roughly three and a half million have turned their back on it. Neither fine words nor promises succeeded in persuading them to stay.

None of the many promises has been kept, and the Party and state leaders lack a concept by which to regain the confidence lost.

On its 40th anniversary the GDR is labouring under an unprecedented head of steam, under pressure verging on an explosion.

Unlike on previous occasions there will be no way in which to shut the escape valves: neither by resorting to force, as in June 1953, nor by sealing the country off, as in August 1961, nor by a dash of liberalisation, as when Herr Honecker came to power, nor by denying and ignoring the existence of problems, as at present.

Is what we are experiencing the midlife crisis of a 40-year-old state or its dying agony?

Joachim Nawrocki

(Die Zeit, Hamburg, 6 October 1989)

THE ARTS

Writers and artists are no longer the spearhead of GDR dissidents

The pundits are agreed that most new arrivals from the GDR via Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia are skilled workers aged, on average, 25.

Intellectuals employed in the academic sector or the arts do not seem to be among their number.

A few years ago life was made particularly difficult for young authors who held unconventional views, so difficult that they were forced to leave the country, with the GDR authorities glad to be rid of them.

Some were forced to renounced their so-called GDR citizenship, others applied to leave the GDR after having been told they would never get anywhere there — certainly never beyond a certain point.

The situation on the cultural front has since undergone an evident change. Expressed in terms of the militant terminology beloved of politics, there has been a kind of cease-fire in the much-vaunted struggles of the day.

It is a cease-fire in which lethargy has taken the place of peace.

There are several reasons why this is the case. Political and economic problems have so come to a head that the arts are much less in the limelight than they would be in what might be called normal times.

When the public are packing their bags to leave and readers are voting in their thousands with their feet, the problems of perenially problematic and doubtful writers and artists are of less interest.

The arts authorities have made concessions to the more or less established writers and artists.

The tactical calculation that pressure can be eased by graduated and revocable kindnesses is naturally part and parcel of the political bag of tricks.

In the GDR every writer is keen to be issued with a multiple official visa that as a rule will enable him to visit the Federal Republic over an initial 12-month period.

It will usually be renewed once the year is up, although one can never be sure.

One writer is issued with a visa, another isn't. But they must all have publishers in the West, have institutions that will invite them and pay them fees.



How else are they to finance a stay in the West?

The result is that men of letters in the GDR tend to think in terms of competition to a degree that goes far beyond what in all societies are the normal tinges of jealousy.

There continue to be examples set as a deterrent. Lutz Rathenow, for instance, has been invited time and again to visit the West. Only once in his entire life as a writer has he been allowed to accept one, to Austria.

On balance, however, most GDR writers are well aware of the distinctive features of the literary scene in the Federal Republic, and the decision they have reached is both simple and sensible.

As a rule they prefer to stay in the GDR because the low cost of living makes it much easier to survive lean periods there than in Western market conditions.

Their ideal is freedom of travel, with a domicile in the GDR and earnings in both East and West.

Statements to the effect that these opportunities ought to be open to everyone who lives in the GDR do not stop the favoured few from having an uneasy conscience, at least now and then, about being so privileged.

At the same time one can well understand them being irritated by Western journalists' constant queries about their so-called privileges.

This covert accusation fails to take into account the fact that the writers and artists questioned have not been able to freely choose their working conditions and that it remains difficult for them to come to terms with the constraints to which they are subject.

These include a sentimental attachment to the GDR, especially among generations that at some stage felt critically sympathetic toward a social system they felt to be capable of improvement.

Writer Ulrich Plenzdorf, who took part in a TV debate at the (West) Berlin radio show, explained why he regularly returned to the GDR by saying, somewhat uncouthly, that he had more than once been a prize fool for having done so.

Yet in comparison with past periods of open repression, the GDR authorities can now be seen to be yielding ground in the arts. Those who remember harder times feel there may now be a ray of hope.

They stay in the GDR to wait and see whether the reform pressure from the east will, sooner or later, sweep and change the GDR too. But those who favour "new thinking" are careful what they say.

Oft bitten, twice shy, they don't want to speak out too soon.

Those who don't hanker after the dreams of their long-lost youth because they were not around in the days of socialist transformation tend to seek refuge in cynicism.

Rainer Schedlinski, 33, recently told the Zürich weekly *Weltwoche* that he and his friends, by joining the ranks of the GDR's Aufbau Verlag authors, had become the "spoilt children of glasnost."

An illegal reading in a private apartment had a greater effect, he said, than an officially arranged public reading to "15 *Kulturbund* mums" on the outskirts of town.

He for one is unbiased and has no illusions about his role in conditions where there is no such thing as democratic access to a wider public for all.

Fritz Rudolf Fries's first novel *Der Weg nach Oobliadooh*, written 22 years ago, was recently published in its first GDR edition.

To his surprise and dismay young people in the GDR identified with the characters in the novel when he read extracts from it there.

He said he was initially reluctant to own up to the fact that this identification could only be possible if nothing substantial had changed in the GDR in over 25 years.

But writers and artists now sense that old structures are gradually coming apart at the seams in the GDR.

Maybe their most deep-seated reason for not leaving the other German state now is a desire to observe this process and to write about it.

Manfred Jaeger

(Deutsches Allgemeines Sonntagsblatt, Hamburg, 6 October 1989)

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his supporters, namely the question of power.

He needs only to look towards Poland and Hungary to assure himself where that road could end if, in his view, he were to make too many concessions.

Those who want reform in the GDR are, then, dependent on themselves. They depend on their tactical skill and their courage to declare themselves, and the powers to recruit followers for their reform programme and their abilities to maintain pressure on the regime.

Their chances of wringing from their rulers decisive concessions which will lead to change are not bad at present. But every day lost strengthens the powers of inertia.

Fritz Ullrich Fack

(Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland, 12 October 1989)

Literature and the arts at a crossroads

In the arts sector the reforms that many complain have yet to be undertaken in the 40-year-old GDR have long been under way. Art and the arts have reached a crossroads in the other German state.

"Morning, noon and night we are urged to embark on reforms," said Hans Pischner of the GDR's *Kulturbund* in a speech marking its 40th anniversary.

He was referring to the "gunbursts from the other side" that "irritate a fair number of people and hit some in our own ranks hard."

Yet the call for reforms comes mainly from his own ranks and falls on fertile soil.

One needs only to go to the theatre or the cinema or to read arts magazines these days to see for oneself that glasnost and the much-vaunted "new thinking" have made an unmistakable mark.

Only the mass media have yet to show any signs of glasnost.

In a 40th anniversary article on GDR literature and art in the magazine *Weimarer Beiträge* literary critic and university teacher Hans Kaufmann writes:

"Nowadays the epoch-making drama of public opinion is neither to be seen and heard in the theatre nor to be read in poetry anthologies; it takes place in newspapers printed in Cyrillic script."

That, he argues, is why the new society requires a "new quality of expression of public opinion."

In another article in the magazine's 40th anniversary issue Rüdiger Bernhardt refers to "two really serious turning-points" in the history of GDR literature.

The first was in the late 1960s, the second is now, in the late 1980s.

The first marked the "final phase of a social strategy" that failed to work, including work by Günter de Bruyn, Werner Heiduczek, Erik Neutsch and, above all, Christa Wolf *(Der geteilte Himmel* and *Nachdenken über Christa T.)* and Ulrich Plenzdorf *(Die neuen Leiden des jungen W.)*.

Literature had failed to perform the role allocated to it and dealt only with hopes and ideals rather than with reality.

Arts policy has always been rich in contradictions and upsets in the GDR. In the early 1950s, while Stalin was still alive, the so-called formalism debate in the newly-founded GDR had "far-reaching effects for many artists," as the GDR arts weekly *Sonntag* put it in a recent review.

There was talk of pseudo-culture and trash art. The Arts Minister, Johannes R. Becher, practised an art in which many writers and artists are past masters to this day. "Becher saw what was happening but censored himself," *Weimarer Beiträge* comments.

Destalinisation, begun in the Soviet Union in 1956, initially made its mark on arts policy in the GDR.

The setback came with the struggle "against decadence and for the development of a socialist realism!"

At the first Bitterfeld Conference in 1959 the slogan *Greift zur Feder, Kumpel!"* (Start Writing, Workmates!) launched a campaign for "socialist German national culture."

It was opposed to "rock 'n roll and other noisy Western music," for instance, and created a local "Lipsi" dance instead (an officially approved GDR alternative to rock 'n roll named after the Latin name for Leipzig).

In 1961, after the Berlin Wall was built, the GDR had to come to terms with itself. It embarked on its *Ankunft im Alltag* (Arrival at Everyday Life), to quote the title of a short novel by Brititte Reimann.

Christa Wolf's *Der geteilte Himmel* (The Divided Sky) dealt with the division of Germany. It was a surprising success and triggered the most comprehensive debate on literature and the arts.

Erich Honecker, who took over from Walter Ulbricht as Party leader in 1971, initially liberalised arts policy in the GDR, but a new ice age and a plethora of disciplinary measures set in after the Biermann Affair in the late 1970s.

Writers were either expelled from the Writers' Association or subjected to public criticism for having protested against Biermann's expulsion to the West.

They included Stefan Heym and Rolf Schneider. SED member Stephan Hermlin was severely reprimanded by the Party.

In the early 1980s a thaw began. Stefan Heym has long been rehabilitated, and a number of writers who left (or were expelled from) the GDR in the 1970s are now back in favour. They include Thomas Brasch and Günter Kunert, while long suppressed plays by Volker Braun and Heiner Müller are now performed and even given rave reviews.

Günter Grass, Uwe Johnson, Thomas Bernhard and Samuel Beckett — all previously taboo — are now deemed acceptable in the GDR and cited as instances of the extent to which it has adopted a more open arts policy.

But politics has returned to the arts. Many leading writers, performers and artists, including actors, singers and pop musicians, have called for an "opening of the media" and a "change in intolerable conditions."

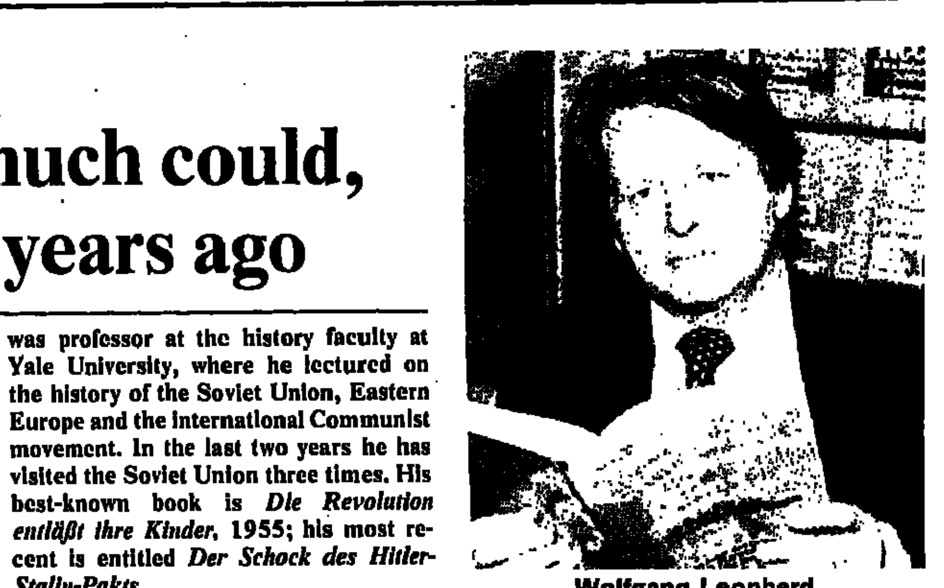
They lament the "unbearable ignorance of the state and Party leadership" with regard to the "mass exodus."

Wilfried Mommert/dpa

(General-Anzeiger, Bonn, 6 October 1989)

PERSONAL VIEW

So little has changed, so much could, says GDR refugee of 40 years ago



Wolfgang Leonhard

(Photo: Archives)

The writer, Wolfgang Leonhard, was born in Vienna in 1921. He spent his childhood in Berlin and 10 years of his youth, from 1935 to 1945, in the Soviet Union. In May 1945 he returned to Berlin as a member of the Ulbricht Group, working until 1947 for the department of agitation and propaganda of the Communist, later Socialist Unity Party, Central Committee. He taught at the party's Karl Marx College for Political Instruction from September 1947 until March 1949. Because of his opposition to Stalinism and the Ulbricht system he fled from the Soviet zone to Yugoslavia in March 1949. He has lived in the Federal Republic of Germany since November 1950 as an expert on questions relating to the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and the GDR. From 1966 to 1987 Leonhard was professor at the history faculty at Yale University, where he lectured on the history of the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and the International Communist movement. In the last two years he has visited the Soviet Union three times. His best-known book is *Die Revolution entläßt ihre Kinder*, 1955; his most recent is entitled *Der Schock des Hitler-Stalin-Pakts*.

Since I fled from what was then the Soviet zone of occupation and is now the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in March 1949, none of the fundamental principles underlying the political structure of East German society have changed.

The GDR was and still is a bureaucratic-cum-dictatorial system, a system which many commentators on developments in the Communist world quite rightly describe as *Kasernensozialismus* (lit: barracks socialism).

It is marked by a vast, distended and, with only a few exceptions, incompetent bureaucracy which incapacitates its population and deprives it of its rights.

It is a system which is neither able to keep pace with the technological advances of the world's industrial nations nor to guarantee an adequate supply of goods for the population as a whole.

It has neither enabled the democratic participation of the population nor has it satisfied its ethical demands.

It has not managed to win over youth to its side. It is unable to give people hope or prospects for the future.

I first made the acquaintance of Walter Ulbricht while I was in Moscow, but I got to know him better between 1945 and 1947.

I already met Erich Honecker on 10 May 1945, and I met him several times before March 1949.

At that time Erich Honecker was a much more affable person than Walter Ulbricht. In principle, however, there was absolutely no difference in the function and the politics of the two.

They were both leading figures in a bureacratic and dictatorial system. Both were bent on consolidating the system and keeping everything under strict control, and both were hardly informed about, and not particularly interested in, the fate of the population.

I fled in March 1949, over 40 years ago. Today I am the witness of a new exodus of refugees.

Although I am a sober-minded and objective ana[illegible] I see the pictures of the thousands of young refugees fleeing from the GDR.

I am so glad that their attempts to flee have been successful. I am so glad that they now have the opportunity to shape their lives the way they want to.

I have tremendous respect for the fact that these refugees were willing to face the tremendous difficulties involved in leaving friends, colleagues and homes.

I can understand only too well that they no longer wanted to live in this system because they feel that it has no future.

My personal sympathy is particularly great, since most of them are the same age I was when I left 40 years ago.

After talking to some of these refugees I am convinced that they have by no means fled from the GDR simply to improve their financial situation, but solely because of their understandable aversion to the system there and a desire to independently and actively begin a new life.

What the German Communists had in mind in 1945 bore no resemblance to what then developed.

The German Communists at that time, of whom I was one, hoped for a republic with a parliamentary democracy and all rights and freedoms for the people — as proclaimed when the KPD was set up.

They did not want the superimposition of a bureaucratic Stalinist system on German soil, but their own democratic path to socialism in line with the specific German situation.

They hoped for genuine comradely cooperation with the other parties already founded in 1945 — the Christian Democratic Union, the Social Democrats and the Liberal Democrats.

Each party had live members with equal rights in the "anti-fascist bloc" and there was every indication at the outset that genuine cooperation was taking place.

When the Communist and Social Democratic parties were forcibly merged to form the SED on 21 April 1946, the German Communists hoped for an independent party in which members could develop an informed opinion democratically, a party whose democratic path would lead to socialism.

Many Communists also favoured a new pluralistic model of socialism along the lines attempted during 1968 Prague Spring and practised today in the Soviet Union, Hungary and Poland.

On its 40th anniversary the GDR stands at a crossroads.

For the following reasons the continuation of the bureacratic and dictatorial style of socialism would undoubtedly mean the end of the GDR:

- The GDR still lags behind western industrialised countries economically. Economic reform is absolutely essential [illegible]
- The experiences of all socialist countries have shown that economic reform cannot be effected in isolation. It can only be implemented within the framework of an overall reform of the system.

This must include reforms in the apparatus of political power, attaching greater importance to laws and the administration of justice, cultural freedom, religious tolerance, open discussions in the mass media, the freedom to form organisations and political parties, and a genuine multi-candidate — or even multi-party — system and proper parliaments to seriously consider the interests and problems facing society.

Economic reform can only be successful on the basis of glasnost and perestroika.

- Reform is inevitable in the GDR, since the people are no longer willing to put up with the situation there and no longer willing to be regimented.

They are rebellious and quite rightly making demands, especially for democratic rights and liberties, reforms and liberalisation.

In view of the economic and technological constraints and the growing pressure exerted by the East German population reforms are bound to materialise in the foreseeable future.

The most important aspect is not a change of leadership, but the factors already listed. Nevertheless, a change of leadership could facilitate the transition to a reform course.

The current GDR leadership, 77-year-old Erich Honecker, 77-year-old leading ideologist Kurt Hager, 75-year-old prime minister Willi Stoph, and 81-year-old head of the state security service Erich Mielke, forms a party gerontocracy which already assumed important functions during the Stalin era and leading functions during the Brezhnev period from 1964 until the mid-1980s.

These politicians represent a strange Stalinist-Brezhnevist mixture. They are neither willing nor able to take note of the real situation in the GDR and even less inclined to initiate reforms via a process of renewal.

They are afraid they might lose their power and privileges. Their vigorous and often provocative demeanour is only an attempt to cover up their fear.

In the current leading echelon of the SED there is no obvious reformer cast in the same mould as Mikhail Gorbachov.

A new post-Honecker leadership, however, could include the following politicians: Günter Mittag, 62, Günther Schabowski, 60, and Egon Krenz, 52.

Günter Mittag could be described as a technocrat. Egon Krenz, an absolute agitator, is Erich Honecker's own favourite.

Günter Schabowski, a trained engineer who is currently the regional party secretary of East Berlin, could be expected to adopt a more accommodating and modern stance.

Although such a change of leadership would not bring about the transition to reforms it would improve prospects of a more flexible and elastic policy which might then lead to a course of reform.

I wish the opposition, above all the new movements "New Forum," "Democracy Now" and many other groups, every success and the growing support of the population.

Their goals and programmatic postulates are impressive. Their demands to be taken seriously as a partner in dialogue are justified. Their proposals are necessary and realistic.

I hope that their endeavour to gain the support of people in the GDR for their cause will be successful.

Future reforms in the GDR, encompassing the development of pluralism, the attainment of democratic rights and liberties, religious tolerance, a freedom of cultural activity, and the guarantee of a broadly based involvement of the citizens of the GDR in the running of their state, would by no means automatically lead to reunification.

If millions of GDR citizens were given the opportunity to reform and restructure their society they would quite rightly be proud of the reforms achieved and quite rightly claim the right to remain master in their own house.

They cannot be expected to simply cheer enthusiastically if West German political parties set up branches in the GDR.

Successful reforms would create a certain feeling of independence in the GDR, accompanied, of course, by *rapprochement* vis-à-vis the Federal Republic of Germany and the possibility of establishing more extensive and intensive ties with Bonn.

In particular I envisage the free and unimpeded exchange of newspapers, periodicals and books, the free and inimpeded exchange of students, professors, workers and representatives from all walks of life, and joint projects in the field of modern research and environmental protection.

Finally, I could then even imagine — albeit at the end of such a process of reform — army units from the Federal Republic of Germany and the GDR joining forces to tear down the barbed wire fences which divide them and to demolish the Berlin Wall.

Wolfgang Leonhard

(General-Anzeiger, Bonn, 7 October 1989)

Continued from page 15

conditions in the intra-German relationship. Above all, the development of aligned systems of pensions is an all-German task.

The Federal Republic of Germany should not use the pensions contributions of the East German refugees here to simply provide relief for its own pensions system.

As long as demands for economic reforms in the GDR are countered by the argument that their realisation is impossible for economic reasons they cannot be implemented.

If, on the other hand, reformers can rely on the binding assurance by the Federal Republic of Germany that it will support economic reforms with its economic power it would then become clear that the opposition to reforms in the GDR merely serves to sustain the existing power structure.

Kurt Biedenkopf

(Rheinischer Merkur/Christ und Welt, Bonn, 6 October 1989)